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Under the Red and Gold

THE SIEGE OF BALER

CEREZO

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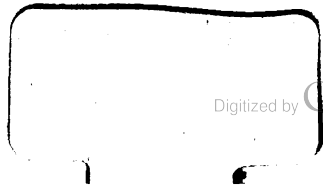

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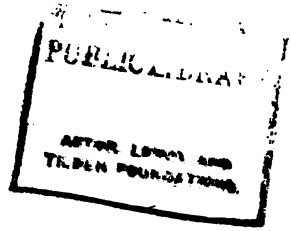

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THE AUTHOR.

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UNDER THE RED AND GOLD

Being Notes and Recollections of

THE SIEGE OF BALER.

BY

CAPTAIN DON SATURNINO MARTIN CEREZO,
Commanding the Detachment.

Translated and Edited by
F. L. DODDS,
Major, U. S. Army.

PUBLISHED BY
FRANKLIN HUDSON PUBLISHING CO.,
KANSAS CITY, MO.,
U. S. A.

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SURVIVORS OF THE GARRISON. 1. Officer commanding the detachment: Don Saturnino Martin Cerezo.

2 Gregorio Catalán Valero
3 Vicente Pediosa Corballera
4 Loreto Gallego Garcia
5 Ramón Boade Torno
6 Miguel Mendez Expósito
7 José Jiménez Beno
8 Felipe Castillo Castillo
9 José Pineda Turán
10 José Martinez Santos
11 Eufrasio Sánchez Martinez
12 Ramón Ripollés Cardona
13 Timoteo López Larios
14 Pedro Plana Basagaña
15 Francisco Real Ayuste
16 Luis Cervantes Gato
17 Juan Chamizo Lucas
18 Manuel Menor Ortega
19 Marcelo Adriano Obregón
20 Marco Mateo Conesa
21 Antonio Bauza Fuyana
22 José Hernández Acocha
23 Eustaquio Gopa Hernández
24 Santos González Roncal
25 Miguel Pérez Leal
26 José Olivares Conejero
27 Emilio Fabregat Fabregat
28 Jesus Garcia Quijano
29 Bernardino Sánchez Caniso
30 Domingo Castro Camarena
31 Pedro Vila Garganté
32 Ramón Mir Brils

Dr. Vigil does not appear in the group, he not being present.

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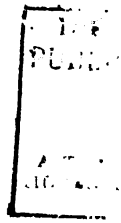

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Translator's Foreword.

While stationed in Manila, three years ago, I read one day in a local Spanish daily paper, *El Mercantil,* an editorial in which the editor announced that he had received from Spain a book in which was recorded the notes and recollections of Captain Martin Cerezo, the only surviving officer of a detachment of Spanish soldiers who sustained a remarkable siege, the story of which is here translated.

The editor of *El Mercantil* was deeply impressed by the tale of suffering and heroism; and, not content with a review of the book, or extracts from it, announced that it would be reproduced in his paper from day to day.

The translator was also impressed when the installments began, and saved the papers as the story appeared. Having returned to the States, I made arrangements to have the paper sent on, but several numbers failed to reach me. It was not until a long time afterwards that I was able to ascertain where the book was published, and to get a copy of it from Spain.

As it is now presented, the introductory part, Cerezo's account of the events following the siege, and the appendices are very much condensed, but the story of the siege itself is given almost entirely in the words of the author.

St. Paul, February 5, 1908.

Kas C. [illegible] Aug. 1923

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To the Reader.

Living yet in my soul, as though of yesterday, those eleven months of anguish that we suffered in the church of Baler, I believe I owe to my country the story of the happenings within those four walls, the last remnant of its dominion in the Philippines.

Content with the gratitude and rewards I have received, I do not attempt to bring myself forward; my only desire being to preserve from oblivion that which merits a place in our Golden Legend, to-day, unhappily, so doubted and tarnished; to record those glorious deeds which doubtless would have been multiplied throughout the whole theater of war if circumstances and means had been other than they were.

A small detachment of soldiers there proved that our military virtues have not decayed. It is well to record it, if it be only to reanimate that saving faith of which we so sorely stand in need.

Cast down as we were by misfortune, fallen into abjectness and discredit, I consider most opportune these pages, a humble summary of those sad days and a tribute due to my valorous companions. Free as I am from bitterness, and desiring neither censure nor criticism, they have, to make them worthy, only my sincerity in writing them.

And—nothing more. Peace to the dead; reflection for the living; and a prayer to God that He will enlighten and protect us.

SATURNINO MARTIN CEREZO.

Madrid, September 30, 1904.

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Introductory.

In a remote corner of the Philippine Archipelago, on the east coast of the island of Luzon, stands the little town of Baler. It is a desolate and lonely spot, with stern mountain walls enclosing it upon the landward side, the vast Pacific spread before it, and an exposed and dangerous coast stretching away to north and south.

Its oldest and most substantial building, the universal hallmark of Spanish conquest, is its church. It is a rude stone edifice, gaunt and bare and neglected; yet this desolate sanctuary is the shrine of the noblest epic of Spanish sovereignty in those ill-starred islands. For within the shelter of its walls a company of Spanish soldiers, starving, forgotten, yet unconquerable, withstood a siege of eleven long months, under circumstances of suffering and heroism, during the last days of the Spanish and the early days of the American dominion in the Philippines.

There is probably no stranger anomaly in all history than the picture of that forsaken band of heroes, fighting their desperate fight and winning immortal laurels in a cause which had ceased to exist, in defense of property which their own country had ceded to aliens, and against the ancient enemy which Spain had transferred to the newer foe with the land itself.

The story is one of patient endurance, of bitter suffering from hunger, disease, and wounds, of death bravely met, of heroic deeds, and of sublime devotion to the flag under which those men were serving. They deserved a closer sympathy and better support, a worthier foe, a more conspicuous field. But the obscurity of their pitiful fortress cannot dim the luster of their heroic story, nor render it less worthy to form the latest chapter in the Golden Legend of romantic Spain.

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The little town stands upon a point of land jutting out from the south shore of a small bay or cove of the same name, and is nearly encircled by a tidal stream, which at times converts it into an island. It consisted, in Spanish days, of the aforesaid church, with its convent or priest's residence; a frame-and-concrete house for the Governor; barracks for the troops; and a dingy tribunal for the administration of what was officially known as justice. These outward and visible signs of Spanish dominion, grouped about the inevitable *plaza,* formed the strong nucleus, around which, along straight roads shadowed by a luxuriant growth of palm and bamboo, were clustered the frail native houses, well typifying, by their lightness and insecurity, the restless and unstable character of the inhabitants.

Although Manila is only about one hundred and twenty miles from Baler, communication with it, over the mountains, was always difficult and uncertain; by sea, almost equally so, for lack of safe anchorage or harbors. Yet, cut off as it was from the outside world, it was the most important town in the region, and under Spanish rule was the capital of the District of El Príncipe.

The only other town of any importance in the District is Casigúran, a place of particular interest to Americans because it was near here that General Funston landed with his force on his way to capture Aguinaldo.

The Governor of El Príncipe, who was usually a captain of the Army, also filled the offices of judge of first instance, Treasury deputy, and director of posts, performing his functions and collecting the tribute of his savage domain as best he could. His authority was, however, ill-supported and questionable. The natives, and especially the more civilized of the Tagálogs, had no love for their masters, and a widespread disaffection was continually at work, undermining what little power he could boast.

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For a year before the opening of Baler's disastrous story the Filipinos had been in insurrection against the Spanish Government. Manila and its neighboring provinces were the center of the disturbance; and El Príncipe was considered a tranquil district until, toward the end of August, 1897, rumors began to be whispered about that the insurgents were taking advantage of its isolated and unguarded coasts to smuggle in arms and ammunition.

The Governor was ordered to investigate the matter, but, as may be imagined, he could verify nothing; his only source of information being in the wild aborigines, who could scarcely be bribed or cajoled within reach even to sell their venison, and whose testimony was practically valueless when it could be obtained. Yet such use of the territory was a menace to more important regions; and a cruiser, the *Maria Cristina,* later not unknown to fame, was dispatched thither to patrol its waters and restore tranquillity to the alarmed towns along the coast.

Baler had been garrisoned up to this time by a corporal and four men of the veteran Guardia Civil; but, in response to the urgent request of the Governor, a detachment of fifty men from the battalion of *cazadores,* under Lieutenant Don José Mota, was dispatched to their relief. They arrived in Baler on September 20th, after a daring and difficult march through the savage mountains, where the enemy was most dangerous and powerful.

Mota was brave and able; but, once in the town, he relied too confidently upon his seeming security, making the mistake which has been the undoing of many a brave man before him—and, alas! of many a one since. Ten men of his scanty force he stationed in the barracks of the Guardia Civil, eighteen others in the schoolmaster's house, and the rest in the *Comandancia.* He selected his own quarters in the schoolmaster's

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house, as being centrally located; and limited his precautions to posting one sentinel in the *plaza,* to keep guard for the entire garrison.

A letter from the local priest to a colleague, dated at this time, contains these caustic and significant words:

"We have had here some war-vessels to reconnoiter the country. You may imagine how much they have discovered. Besides, we have fifty *cazadores,* commanded by a very young lieutenant. These are calamities which God orders for us, and which we have to endure."

The garrisoning of Baler by so insufficient a force was merely inviting disaster. The very weakness of its former condition might have saved it; but it now took rank as an obstacle, not strong enough to be feared, but worth getting rid of.

Very early on the morning of October 5, 1897, a large band of the insurgents, stealing in through the forest's trails and the dusky palm groves, as silently as the mists and shadows of dawn, fell upon the sleeping garrison, killed and wounded a score of their number, including Mota himself, and retired as quickly as they had come, bearing away with them fifteen prisoners, among whom was the parish priest, and a valuable booty of arms and ammunition.

Two days later the captain of the *Manila,* steaming leisurely into the little harbor, and landing with the neighborly intention of exchanging news with Mota and the priest, was confronted with the shocking spectacle of a number of dead bodies lying unburied on the *plaza.* The survivors of the massacre had fortified themselves in the church; and, after reinforcing them with twelve men from his ship and a doctor to care for the wounded, the captain of the *Manila,* re-embarked and steamed away for Casigúran, to communicate the news of the disaster to Army headquarters.

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His telegram produced immense astonishment among the officials in Manila; but they so far recovered from their surprise as to dispatch to Baler, by the transport *Cebu,* one hundred men, under Captain Don Jesús Roldan Maizonada—a force proportionately even more inadequate than the first company of fifty, to cope with the swelling forces of the insurgents, rendered doubly dangerous by their recent success.

After two days of delay and a sharp brush with the insurgents, who had returned and entrenched themselves strongly along the shore, Roldan succeeded in landing his force, October 17th. He had no alternative than to take up his quarters in the church and fortify his position to the best of the scanty means at his disposal. The troops which he had relieved embarked two days later; the *Manila,* leaving with him all the provisions she could spare, weighed anchor: and "when this vessel and the *Cebu* steamed away," in the words of Baler's heroic chronicler, "the capital of the district of El Príncipe was left reduced to the church, defended by a scanty force, cut off from all communication by land, with help by way of the sea uncertain and difficult, and surrounded by a silent and deserted town —a sad presage of that which was so soon to follow."

Only a few hours after the vessels steamed away the rebels returned to the attack. We shall not follow all the events of this earlier and lesser siege. It lasted three months, during which the garrison suffered many privations. Rations were scarce and in bad condition. The firing was incessant and the duties laborious. There were many sick and wounded. In the fighting of January 11th alone, the day when the besiegers had completely invested the church, there were seventeen persons (including an officer) wounded. There were no medicines, nor surgical attendance.

But relief came at last when, January 23, 1898, a force of

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four hundred men, under Major Génova, and the news of the peace of Biac-na-Bató reached Baler within a few hours of each other.

Roldan was now ordered to receive the surrender of his late antagonists. But there were very few who availed themselves of this opportunity to "bury the hatchet"; "and it was a significant fact," adds the historian, "that they all came in without arms, a clear indication that the peace was not likely to last."

The authorities in Manila now determined to withdraw Génova's battalion and to replace Roldan's company. The relieving force was limited to a detachment of fifty men, commanded by Lieutenants Don Alonso Zayas and Don Saturnino Martin Cerezo.

The Detachment set out from Manila on February 7, 1898. Its members little thought that it would be nearly a year and a half before they would return to Manila; that they were to undergo hardships and suffering almost unheard of; and that when they returned, it would be to find that the sovereignty of their country over the Philippines had passed to another nation. The only officer of the Detachment to survive was Lieutenant Martin Cerezo, and it is his story that will now be given.

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THE SIEGE.

FIRST PERIOD.

From February to November, 1898.

I.

THE RELIEF.

CAPTAIN LAS MORENAS.—SCARCITY OF RATIONS.—INCIDENTS.—PRELIMINARY DISPOSITIONS.—POLICY OF ATTRACTION.—THE SCHOOLMASTER LUCIO.—IN DARKNESS AND BAREFOOTED.—REQUESTS DISREGARDED.

The appointment of Don Enrique de las Morenas y Fossi, Captain of Infantry, as Politico-Military Governor of El Príncipe was coincident with our departure, and we made the journey together. It took us five days to make it; and I deem it opportune to briefly notice the itinerary, in order to show what, even in profound peace, were the means of communication between this District and the capital of the Archipelago.

By way of the Pasig, a beautiful river, whose poetic shores furnish abundant examples, although only beginnings, of what can be done by labor and civilization in the Philippines, the vessel carried us as far as Santa Cruz on the Laguna de Bay, where we stayed that night, setting out for Maubán the next day.

It took us two days to make this short journey (twenty-five miles), passing through Magdalena, Majayjay, Lumbán, and Alfonso. Las Morenas was suffering from neuralgia. He could travel on horseback the first day, but he had to be carried in a hammock during the second day's march.

Arriving at Maubán, we had to undergo another delay while awaiting the arrival of a transport which left Manila three days

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before our departure. Having embarked on this, we reached our destination on the evening of the 12th (February, 1898).

On board this same transport were also Friar Cándido Gómez Carreño, who had been made prisoner at the time of the surprise of Mota's detachment, and who was going back to his parish, and the then provisional surgeon of the Medical Corps, Don Rogelio Vigil de Quiñones y Alfaro, who was under orders to organize and direct the hospital service, which had been formerly totally neglected. Accompanying him for this purpose were a corporal and an attendant of the Hospital Corps, both natives, and a European attendant; a *personnel* that was apparently regarded as sufficient.

The river, which was now overflowed to within a few feet of the church, presented the first difficulty on our arrival, since some rations which our men landed on the beach had to remain there more than three days, deteriorating in the inclement weather.

That river was always, for us, an obstacle to communication with the outside world. Under other circumstances it might have been of some use to us, or even served as a means of security; but, with its rising and falling with the tides and rains, unfordable for the greater part of the time, it was in fact only a net that held and isolated us.

There had been a bridge, but it had been destroyed by the floods, and there remained of it only the well-built piers of masonry. They would have served very well for its reconstruction without much effort, but they were allowed to stand in the stream useless, while, it is worth noting, there was within a short distance plenty of timber, already cut, to rebuild it.

The problem was considered solved by using a boat which the boatman pulled across by clinging to a *bejuco* (a sort of rattan) stretched from one bank to the other, after the manner of some ferries in Spain. Las Morenas undertook to appoint a

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native every day for this service, but the latter took himself off whenever he felt like it; and, as passengers were not wanting, since almost all the people lived by fishing and salt-making, parties were always waiting on one side for someone to bring back the boat which had been left on the other.

It was a means of reminding those people of our isolation when they deprived us of this means of crossing.

The change in the politico-military governorship and of the garrison (the two commands were independent) having been effected, Génova, with his troops, and Roldan, with his company, embarked on the same ship that had brought us, the vessel sailing for Manila as soon (the sea having become calm) as the anchor could be raised for the departure from the roadstead.

The departure of the transport is in reality the first scene, as it were, of the tragedy, the story of which I am going to write.

Those rations that had been left for us on the beach were the last we were to receive. With these and those stored in the church we were to face a long siege. Who could have believed that not one man, not one cartridge, not one sack of biscuit were we to receive from our army?

Our supply of ammunition was not scanty, but the same could not be said of the rations. When all had been brought in, we could see how greatly damaged they were; not only on account of the circumstances under which they had been landed and brought in, but also because of the place of storage, which was exceedingly damp and cramped, and which lacked ventilation and sunlight. Besides, we did not bring a great many with us, and Génova's force, with its daily consumption of rations for four hundred men, had about used up the best articles, leaving us only the damaged and unserviceable.

In a few days the state of decomposition of the rations and

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the impossibility of utilizing some of them made it necessary to take stock, as it were, and to reject a large part of them. In seeking to make up the deficiency that now threatened us on this account, we sought to obtain the good-will of the people by buying from them all the meat and fish they offered us, paying them usually at prices fixed by themselves, and consequently stimulating their cupidity. By this proceeding we succeeded in causing the absent to come back into the town and to turn again to their ordinary pursuits, and at the same time reduced the expenditure of our available food supplies.

But this saving of our rations could not continue very long. Incited by Corporal Vicente González Toca, a man of undisciplined mind, whom I had to put to death later, the soldiers protested that neither the carabao meat nor the venison should be considered a part of the ration. It was necessary to listen to them, and information of the protest was communicated to the Captain-General in Manila for a decision, which turned out to be in favor of the claims of the troops.

Moreover, as if Baler were a prosperous trading-post, easy to supply, it was further ordered that, in consideration of the want of means of livelihood among the people of the town, such provisions or rations as they might ask for should be sold to them. Following this was a list of prices and one of the articles composing each class of the rations; but not even any intimation that we should have opportune supply.

The Detachment was at first lodged in the church, the place that events had demonstrated to be the most suitable. There we were at least in position for avoiding a surprise; there was our ammunition; there was the place of deposit for our rations, good or bad, few or many; and there was our last refuge in case of any unpleasant contingency.

But Captain Las Morenas, wishing to impress upon the na-

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tives his lively desire for intimacy and confidence, suggested to Lieutenant Alonso, now commanding the Detachment, the desirability of accommodating the troops in the *Comandancia,* where the Captain had his official residence and offices, leaving as a guard for the church only a small detail under the orders of a corporal. All this was done; and when the post of the Guardia Civil, which watched the beach every day to see that no arms were landed, was withdrawn, one or two files of soldiers were ordered for that service.

Captain Las Morenas desired especially the repopulation of the town, the administrative regeneration of the District, and the unity and concord of the people. He was an optimist, and he proposed to himself to convert them morally and socially. He did, in fact, succeed to a certain extent, owing to the commercial relations already spoken of; because, on account of the desire for gain, and believing that the past was completely forgotten, the people were already returning to their habitations.

It is true that the return to normal conditions, which was going on all over the islands, contributed powerfully to this repopulation of the town; but the return to normal conditions was more apparent than real, and, according to the "voice of the people," temporary—"until June." It did, however, greatly serve to tranquilize the minds of the people.

Because of the Captain's undue confidence, we had soon to bewail a misfortune. In seeking, perhaps, the good-will of the people, he had taken as his adviser or counselor (at least, so it was thought from his intimate intercourse) the schoolmaster, one Lucio, and had devoted himself assiduously to the cultivation of the lands pertaining to the *Comandancia,* making use for that purpose of the gratuitous services of the people. This method of farming, a proof of his confidence in

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the genuineness of the peace, he committed to the charge of the schoolmaster, who was not long in gaining the enmity of all the inhabitants.

The people, in fact, complied in this service very unwillingly, claiming that, owing to the private nature of the object of the service, their labor ought not to be devoted to it without compensation, even though it were ordered under the letter of the law; that it was prejudicial to their interests; and that it was an abuse. So, while the Captain supposed that, on account of his attractive manner toward the people, whatever he ordered would be cheerfully received and obeyed, they, on the contrary, were objecting; and, in their eagerness to get satisfaction out of somebody, they blamed the schoolmaster for having advised such a disagreeable servitude. The labor and the murmuring went on until finally the poor schoolmaster was murdered by the people.

It is certain also that it was this individual we had to thank, on our part, that there was not done at this time and under favorable conditions that which soon became so necessary to the preserving of our lives, and which was so simple and easy to do.

As Baler had no water supply except from a watercourse which flowed around its south and west, on the opposite bank of which the dense woods began, and as the whisperings of the revolution were constantly spreading, it occurred to me that the situation would be critical if, having to confront a new siege, we should find ourselves without water; either because the enemy would deprive us of it by diverting the stream, which would be an easy matter, or else, by hiding themselves in the woods, they could render it impossible for us to obtain it, since, safely screened by the dense thickets, they could easily drive us away or shoot us at will.

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The very slight elevation of the land and the nearness of the sea convinced me that it would be a simple matter to dig a well. I indicated this to Las Morenas, pointing out that the *plaza* was the place most suitable to the purpose, and explaining to him, judiciously, my suspicions. He heard the proposition somewhat carelessly, saying that we would talk it over with the schoolmaster. And so he did; but as the latter, surely wanting in truthfulness, argued that already, on other occasions, efforts had been made to open wells, but without success, my project was abandoned.

Struggling along, therefore, against adversity and abandonment, the time came when the troops had nothing with which they could make a light at night; the rations, as I have already said, were not abundant; material for repairing the clothing was wanting, and we began to need it badly; we did not have in store even one poor pair of shoes, and those unfortunate boys of ours had soon to go barefoot.

We asked for all this, and urged it with insistency, with the plain, logical, inexorable insistency of necessity; but (bitter it is to say it) we were not even listened to.

There were powerful reasons, I since believe, for this neglect. I do not inquire what they were, nor examine them, nor judge them; but the fact is, and it is well to point it out, that from the 12th of February, 1898, the day of our arrival at Baler, until the 2d of June, 1899, the day of our memorable capitulation, we received, as I have said before, not one cent, not one biscuit, not one cartridge.

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II.

BEGINNING OF THE SIEGE.

THE INSURRECTION IS RENEWED.—COMMUNICATION SHUT OFF.—ESCAPE OF A PRISONER.—NOTICES OF ATTACK.—FLIGHT OF THE INHABITANTS.—WITHOUT CLOTHING.—MEASURES OF PRECAUTION.—MORE DESERTIONS.—EVERYBODY TO THE CHURCH.—FIRST COMBAT.—BESIEGED.

That desire to establish a principle, already referred to in connection with the murder of the schoolmaster; those whisperings of another and much more vigorous rebellion, which went so far even as to appoint the month of June as the date for the kindling of the fire, were increasing with alarming rapidity, like the rumbling of thunder, which, bursting in the heights, seems to roll along among the peaks and precipices of the range.

In April, 1898, I learned that recruiting was going on in Carranglán, Pantabangán, and Bongábon for a party which had its *rendezvous* in San José de Lupao. I tried to find out secretly whether the rumor had any foundation in fact; and, through some inhabitants of Baler itself, who had gone out to procure rice in the *pueblos* named, I succeeded in verifying it. "They tried also to enlist us," my informants said, "and they offered us good pay." I immediately informed the Politico-Military Governor and the commander of the troops, who answered me, the former that he would advise the Captain-General, and the latter that he would make it known in writing to the commanding officer of the post of Pantabangán, in order that he might adopt suitable measures.

During the latter half of May the situation continued to

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grow more and more alarming.* The force just referred to had now become numerous enough to take the field, and it did so. It took possession of the towns named, where it had been recruited, and shut us off from all communication with the rest of the Island.

We soon found how strict was the vigilance employed to shut us in. On the 1st of June we remitted to Manila the muster-rolls and returns for May. The mail was seized and the bearers made prisoners; but after five days they succeeded in getting away and returning to us, bringing warning of the new dangers that were threatening Baler.

It was undoubtedly true that our little Detachment continually excited the cupidity and anxious desire of the enemy. Nothing more natural. Emboldened by the easy surprise of October, which yielded them their first supply of Mauser rifles; their victory at the time of the disembarkation from the *Manila;* and the corraling of Roldan's company: knowing, as they must have known, our situation and resources in detail, our practical isolation from the side of the sea; and eager to gain renown by capturing us—it was logical, I say, for them to look longingly upon Baler.

They were sure of the complicity and assistance of the people of the town. They believed in their ability and that awaiting only for them to come and take possession were fifty rifles with abundant ammunition. And above all was that desire of cutting off the Detachment; a desire not fully satisfied in the former cases, and which, as a consequence, must have stimulated their vanity extremely; a desire, moreover, which they could regard then as of very easy realization, because on

*By one of the last mails we had from Manila overland we received the *Gazette*, with the news of the rupture with the United States and the catastrophe at Cavite.

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their side were overwhelming numbers, and on ours excessive discouragement and helplessness.

Seeing the impossibility of communicating information of the situation to the Captain-General directly, Las Morenas sent for the ex-leader and resident of the town, Teodorico Novicio Luna, a relative of the celebrated author of "Spoliarium," Luna Novicio, whom Spain favored with the reward of honor at the Exhibition of Fine Arts at Madrid in the year 1884.

Las Morenas asked Luna if there was a reliable person who would bear a message to the Governor of San Isidro, in order to have it transmitted to Manila. He replied affirmatively, and presented one Ramillo, for whom he said he would be responsible. To this man was delivered a message in cipher, which he attached to his thigh, so as to prevent its discovery in case of capture. He soon returned, saying that the enemy had in fact detained him, stripped him, and found the message, which they were unable to read and the origin of which he would not tell; that they had finally torn the paper to pieces; and that they would not permit him to go further. They and God know whether all this was true or false. For my part, this tying of the dispatch to the leg, which was more likely to arouse suspicion, in case they should strip him, than anything else, has always appeared to me a very silly proceeding.

About this time there arrived from Binangónan two *pontines* bringing *palay* (unhulled rice) to sell to us in Baler. The opportunity to transmit the rolls and returns was one not to be lost, and we seized it, entrusting the papers to the man in charge of the vessels for the purpose of delivery to the commander of the garrison at Binangónan. They very obligingly accepted the commission, and departed, leaving us naturally hopeful that our returns would reach Manila.

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But our hopes ended very shortly in bitter disappointment; since no sooner had the vessels departed, after having completed the sale of their merchandise (and carried out the secret mission which undoubtedly was the cause of their coming), than the news was spread, founded on the information brought by the crews, that Binangónan was already in insurrection.

It was one more proof of the little confidence that could be placed in the inhabitants, so reserved when they could give us information and so communicative afterwards when they thought to annoy us with the news.

On St. John's Day we had still another bad omen to note. For some time before that there had been two men confined in the jail. This had been burned during the occurrences of October; and it became necessary to remove them to the *Tribunal,* as the municipal building was called there, and there they had remained, serving their sentence or awaiting the result of their trial. I do not know what the crimes may have been for which they were incarcerated—not very grave, perhaps; but both were natives of the country; they were being detained by us; and, in spite of the opportunities presented, the fact is, that their "fellow-citizens" had not liberated them. This fact deserves careful consideration.

The Captain, nevertheless, took one of them, who said his name was Alejo, to act as his servant, the Politico-Military Governor not having any right to take one of the men from the Detachment for such duty.

As Alejo's behavior was good, he was allowed to go about everywhere; and, needless to say, had plenty of opportunity for prying and observing. He it was who gave, so to speak, the signal for the abandonment of the town, taking himself off on the 24th of June, and taking with him the saber belonging to Señor Vigil, our doctor.

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Las Morenas assigned the duty of capturing Alejo to one Moises, a leader in the former insurrection, who soon returned, saying that Alejo had joined the *Insurrectos* at Pantabangán, and that a numerous party was coming against us on the 27th in order to inflict death on Novicio Luna, "because he had paid no attention to their invitation to join the uprising."

Novicio was sent for, under the supposition, perhaps, that he was ignorant of the news that had been brought; but, as the whole thing was nothing more than deception, since they were only getting ready for the surprise, the said Novicio was, of course, not found in his house. "He has gone to the fields," said his family; "he will not be back for some days."

Teodorico Novicio Luna was, in fact, "Chief of all the *Insurrecto* forces in the District of El Príncipe," and where he had gone was to procure arms for the band that, under his orders and in conjunction with that from Pantabangán, was to return against the post of Baler.

Everything was now becoming plain. On the 26th desertions from the town were observed; which indicated an early attack, just as the flight of certain birds often indicates the proximity of the tornado. It was necessary to take energetic measures, and promptly.

We were made to understand this by the action of the whole population the following morning, while we had still been hesitating. At daybreak there no longer remained a single inhabitant in the town; all was silent and deserted.

But this was not the worst; for, after all, it was better for it to be deserted than for us to have bad neighbors; the gravest losses, and those we most felt, occurred in their carrying away Friar Carreño's trunk, with three hundred and fifty *pesos* in ready money, and, above all, in their taking away all the inner and outer clothing that our soldiers had sent out to

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be washed. I have already told how scantily our poor boys were supplied with clothing.

Since it was now necessary for us to recognize and yield to the inevitable, we were ordered to prepare to defend ourselves in the church. During the day (the 27th) we moved to that place some provisions that had been taken to the *Comandancia* because of the better ventilation of that building; and also about seventy *cavanes* (a *cavan* contains seventy-five liters) of *palay*, which the priest had bought from the *pontines* that had come from Binangónan, with a view to selling it at a profit not prohibited by the canons.

That afternoon we had to note the disappearance of the native Hospital Corps men, Corporal Alfonso Sus Fojas and Private Tomás Paladio Paredes, and of my servant Villadiego and a Peninsular private, Felipe Herrero López. That night we shut ourselves up in the church, with Vigil, Friar Gómez Carreño, and the Politico-Military Governor, whose authority was vanishing like smoke.

The same was happening with all our enthusiasm. It was undeniable that the situation was very critical, the enemy arrogant and numerous, those walls weak, the elements of defense slender, treason possible, and help by no means certain. The moment, in short, had arrived, a moment always agonizing, in which the voice of honor rises impelling the consummation of the sacrifice, and when death is probable, imminent, without other glory than that of our own consciences.

That lonely ocean, the river an unfordable moat, the town deserted and silent, the forest and mountains which must be regarded as completely shutting us off, and the abandonment which was becoming plain to us, were surely not circumstances to inspire us with courage and fortitude.

On the morning of the 28th I made a reconnaissance with fourteen men, without incident; and during the day those of

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us who were off guard duty occupied ourselves in bringing a supply of water into the church, filling twenty odd *tinajas* (earthenware water-jars), which we got out of some of the houses of the town.

On the 29th the commander of the Detachment, my comrade Alonso, made the reconnaissance with the same number of men; and we had no misfortune to lament except the desertion of a soldier, Félix García Torres, who fled, it seems, from the "crash," as do rats from falling ruins. After all, it was not the first desertion, nor was it to be the last.

We next occupied ourselves in demolishing the so-called convent, which was in fact only the residence of the parish priest, at the side of the church. We stored in its basement all the wood obtained in its demolition; and, intending to use it as a *corral*, we lift the basement wall intact to serve as a fence. This wall was of stone, and about two meters high.

I also had three or four horses caught, so that, in case of necessity, we might kill them and eat their flesh. But, some of the soldiers having protested, saying that they would not eat it, and Alonso saying the same, and the others not appearing to take very kindly to the idea, there was nothing for me to do but to submit to what the Captain told me, and to order the horses turned loose.

It was the will of God that the date of June 30, 1898, should be signalized with blood. Up to that time we had to record only menaces, presages, and fears, disheartening treachery and mocking villainy; but that morning the cloud closed in on us, and (I say it without boasting) with the relief of a sensation desired, yet feared. The cloud closed down and we breathed it in with relief.

I had gone out on the daily reconnaissance with only fourteen men, the same number as on former days. All was si-

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..THE CHURCH.

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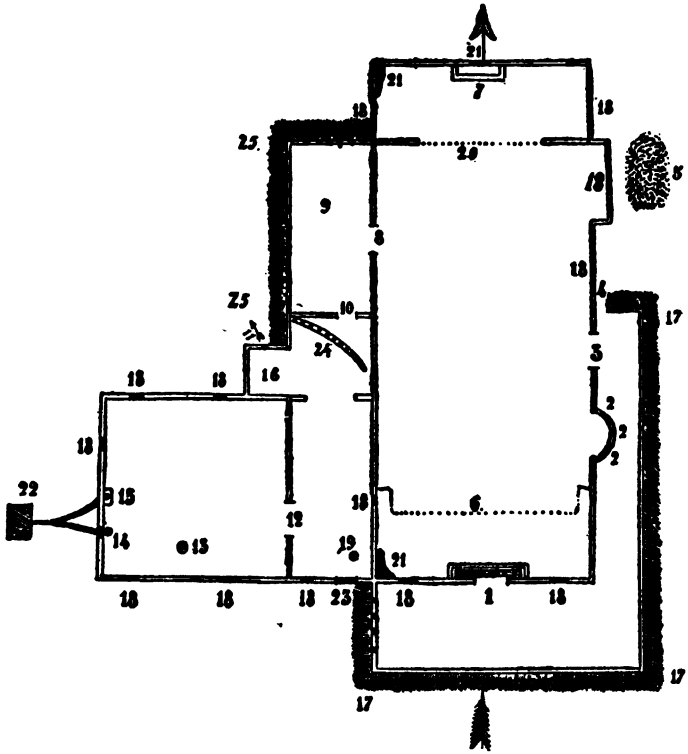

PLAN OF THE CHURCH.

1. Door.
2. Baptistery with three loopholes.
3. Door opening on the road to the river.
4. Entrance to the trenches.
5. Pepper and tomato beds.
6. Projection of the Choir,
7. High altar.
8. Door opening into the sacristy.
9. Sacristy.
10. Door from the sacristy to the corral.
11. Small opening to the ditch of the Trench of the sacristy.
12. Opening from the first enclosure to the second enclosure or corral.
13. Well.
14. Closet.
15. Urinal.
16. Tiled platform.
17. Trench with its ditch.
18. Loopholed windows.
19. Oven that we built.
20. Railing of the presbytery.
21. Parapets constructed on the walls of the church.
22. Cess-pool.
23. Entrance to the convent, the door of which was fortified.
24. Entrenchment to cover the door of the sacristy.
25. Ditch and trench of the sacristy.

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lence. We were marching with the ordinary precautions, but without noticing anything that could cause us uneasiness; when, on reaching the Bridge of Spain, on the west of the town, suddenly the enemy, posted along the stream which flows under the bridge, began a heavy fire and at once rushed upon us, attempting to surround us.

Comprehending their design, there was nothing we could do but fall back upon the church. It was necessary for us to get to shelter in all haste, and we accomplished it with some difficulty, carrying with us Corporal Jesús García Quijano, who was wounded severely in the foot.

It had fallen to my lot to reply to the first shots, and I was to reply to the last.

We were besieged.

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III.

FROM THE 1ST TO THE 19TH OF JULY.

FIRST LETTER FROM THE ENEMY.—PREPARING FOR RESISTANCE.—SECOND LETTER.—REPLY OF LAS MORENAS.—CONSTRUCTION OF TRENCHES.—GREGORIO CATALAN SETS FIRE TO SEVERAL HOUSES.—NAVARRO LEON REPEATS THE ENTERPRISE.—DEFENSE AGAINST ASSAULT.—SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES.—SEDITION.—LETTER OF FRIAR GÓMEZ.—WARNING FROM VILLACORTA.—NO SURRENDER.

At daybreak the following morning we found a letter which the enemy had left near the church. In it they told us that we ought to lay down our arms in order to avoid the useless shedding of blood, seeing that almost all the Spanish troops had done so, and that further resistance was rash. They added that their force present consisted of three companies overwhelmingly numerous and prepared to capture us. This letter produced no great impression.

As to the capitulation of almost all the Spanish forces, we thought the story nothing more than a stupid artifice on the part of the enemy. But as the manifestations of force were incontestable, and as the facts that we had been able to gather showed that the situation was critical and the peril very real, we understood that it was going to be a long story. We therefore exerted ourselves to prepare for it with every means that we could reach. Suspicion and hesitation had given way to certainty and decision, and something great had awakened in our souls.

On my part, I began again to insist upon the well; because, if we should be closely besieged and should be unable

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to leave the church, as happened afterwards, there would be nothing left for us but surrender at discretion. Las Morenas continued to believe stubbornly in what the dead schoolmaster had said; but he finally gave me authority, and, with five soldiers, we put our hands to the work.

The result showed very soon that I had not suggested an impossibility. At a depth of four meters we found water in abundance, enough for all the necessities of life. We now had nothing to fear on account of thirst; but the soil below was very sandy, the subterranean current very strong, and the opening was soon stopped up. It was necessary to line the well, and for that purpose we took to pieces a pillar of stones, which was in the *corral*. This not sufficing, we sunk a half of a wine-barrel in the bottom. My comrade Alonso, with the rest of the available force, occupied himself meanwhile in filling up the doors and windows; the admirable warlike preparations of the enemy demanding no less on our part.

The following day (in the morning also, since the enemy did not come near us except under cover of darkness) we found a second message about ten paces from the church, and surely they had left it in a manner so strange as to give us rather a pleasant shock. It was found placed in the hollow of a piece of bamboo, one end of which was stuck in the ground, while the other was covered with a banana leaf, for the purpose, no doubt, of keeping the rain from wetting its contents. Apparently they did not wish to give us an opportunity to call their messages mere "paper sops."

The second letter consisted merely of complaints because we did not reply to the first; which, they said, "was not complying with our obligations as gentlemen." They then enlarged upon what they had already said in the first concerning the victorious progress of the insurrection, assuring us that they

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had mastered the greater number of the provinces of Luzon; that the capital itself, Manila, was besieged by 22,000 Tagálogs, who had succeeded in cutting off its water-supply; and that it was in imminent peril of succumbing to thirst unless it should capitulate.

They no doubt informed us of this situation in Manila because of the similar plight in which they thought they had placed us by cutting off the canal, thinking that our water-supply was limited and that we therefore were threatened with immediate deprivation of an element so necessary.

The reply of Las Morenas was suitable and conciliating. "Manila will not surrender for want of water," he told them, "while it is possible to utilize the water of the sea, which offers itself in abundance." He went on advising them that they ought not to be deluded; that they should return to the obedience they owed to Spain; and that he, their Politico-Military Governor, would receive them with open arms.

He finished by recommending that they leave no more letters in the vicinity of the church; that in order to send them they should sound the "attention"; and that if we should answer by the same signal, they should send a bearer with the message, but only one man, and with a white flag. He also pointed out the manner in which an answer would be returned to them. We would raise a white flag and sound the "attention," and they could then send someone to receive the answer.

It had been decided that we would not send any soldier, for fear that the deserters might catechise him or lure him away. One of those wretches, Felipe Herrero López, who had been my servant, had the impudence to present himself to receive this answer. I went out myself to give it to him, and tried with the fairest words I could command to persuade him to return to his allegiance; but, seizing the message, he answered

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not a single word, and returned at a run to his companions, a camp, to him, of treachery and shame.

On the 3d they sent us another letter by a deserter, Félix García Torres, whom we would not receive; telling him that he should make the enemy understand that if, in future, they continued to select emissaries of that class, we would receive them with bullets. I suppose they had done this because they knew that such persons would be more likely to understand us; perhaps, also, because if such persons were lost, if something happened to them, it would not be of very great moment; perhaps, also, they wished thus to annoy us. But we could not receive them. Their presence with the message calling upon us to lower the flag, the same that their traitorous lips had touched, was a cowardly outrage which we would in no wise tolerate.

The same day, it having become impossible to go out of the church, on account of the constant firing kept up by the enemy, it was necessary to take up some flagstones in order to construct an oven in the *corral,* since we had no bread in store when we shut ourselves up in the church, and it was seventy-two hours since the last morsel was consumed.

The oven, with all the defects that can be well imagined, but useful for the immediate supply of so precious an article, was finished that afternoon. To facilitate the washing of the few articles of clothing that still remained to us (thanks to the honest inhabitants, who could not carry it all away), we sawed in two another empty wine-barrel, like the one sunk in the well, and thus provided ourselves with two fine wooden tubs. Two tin cans that had held Australian meat served as buckets to fill these tubs. We now needed only a better supply of clothing to make our washing arrangements more complete, since some of us had to go naked, or little less than naked, if we wished to indulge in the luxury of clean clothing.

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While we omitted no precautions necessary to prolonged resistance, neither was the enemy wanting in diligence. Reduced to the narrow inclosure of that humble church, where nothing appeared more remote than divine worship, and where surely never was God more earnestly invoked and reverenced than in those days so bitter, we had to look on, day after day, without power to prevent it, while the trenches of the siege were stretching out, belting about and shutting us in, forming something very like the web that the spider so skillfully weaves to make secure against the writhings and attempts to escape of his victim.

We could not neutralize those labors because the numerical superiority of the enemy was great, and any attempt on our part would have caused useless loss, a disaster, material and moral, which we could not afford to risk.

Neither was the enemy exposing himself while constructing the approaches. He very well knew the danger of exposure and took advantage of the cover afforded by the darkness of the night. We were on the alert to fire toward the point where we heard a noise, but the sound of the waves of the near-by sea helped also to protect the enemy. Thus they were able to bring their trenches to within fifty paces of us at some points, and even within twenty paces at others, tracing a line, rather irregular, but covered and protected at various points by the houses nearest the church.

In approaching the latter at the points that seemed to be the most vulnerable they leveled some of those habitations, transforming them into regular field-works, which gave excellent protection against our projectiles and from which they could annoy us at will, thanks to a kind of parapet that they raised in each one, the parapet being loopholed and perfectly disposed and revetted.

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Up to the present I had been obliged to record more than one instance of that most infamous and detestable crime that a soldier can commit—desertion. As a contrast to such cowardly acts, it is now a pleasure to record a deed of self-abnegation and heroism worthy of encomium, by a most modest individual, Gregorio Catalán Valero. It is the first of those made memorable by the siege and it is, as well, among those that deserve special mention.

Little was wanting now to the completion of that girdle of trenches, and we saw that, to obtain a strong support, they were directing it towards the barracks of the Guardia Civil, situated less than fifteen paces from the church, near the northeast corner. From there it was plain that they could do us much damage because of the proximity and condition of the building, and of the command it gave them against us.

It was necessary to destroy it at all hazard, and Gregorio did it with a serenity and boldness truly admirable. He dashed out of the church, and under a heavy fire kindled not only the barracks but also the school buildings, and with such skill and deliberation that they were completely destroyed, in spite of the swarm of *Insurrectos* who, although so numerous, did not dare to defy our bullets and expose themselves openly to prevent the realization of that undertaking.

Gregorio Catalán may still be living.* If he should read these pages, I hope he may regard it as a modest recompense that I can in this way give him praise.

As our soldier needs only an example, the initiative, for him to go wherever we will lead him, a few days later another boy, Manuel Navarro León, a victim later of the epidemic that

*It has come to my notice, since writing the above, that Catalán died in great poverty, a victim of the disabilities incurred during the siege.

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we suffered, succeeded in setting fire to another near-by house, from which the enemy had been firing at us.

This display of stubborn resistance, united to our constant vigilance, which we showed in taking advantage of any carelessness on the enemy's side and not allowing him to show himself with impunity, caused the enemy, naturally, to become impatient; with the result that it was not long before we noticed that he was preparing to make an assault.

Meanwhile we also made suitable preparations, filling in the lower half of each door and covering the upper half with bundles of blankets or boxes filled with earth. The windows were treated in the same way, so that no one could enter that way, and loopholes were made.

In order that we might get out should any reason for doing so offer itself, we left a small opening in the door in the east wall of the church. We were thus locked in so tightly that only one terrible *intruder* could make his way into our refuge, his way becoming, for this same reason, every moment more easy: Death.

On the 8th of July the leader, Cirilo Gómez Ortiz, sent us a letter, asking for a suspension of hostilities, in order that the people might have a rest from continual fighting. The man affected the generous *rôle;* and, saying that he had learned from deserters that we were suffering in the matter of subsistence, he offered us whatever we might need, and proposed that we send two unarmed men for it. As an earnest of the offer, he sent with the letter a small box of cigarettes for the Captain and a trifle for each of the soldiers.

The suspension was agreed upon (and nobody needed it more than we did) until nightfall, at which time it was agreed that the firing might begin again. We thanked Ortiz for his kind offer, and informed him that we had an abundance of all

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kinds of provisions; and, in return for his civilities, sent him a bottle of sherry, in order that he might drink our health, and a handful of *regalias*.

At the time agreed upon hostilities were renewed, and were not again interrupted during the whole siege.

Those people resorted to every kind of expedient to accomplish our surrender. Seeing that the news of their victories throughout the Island had no effect upon us, they tried to intimidate us with the network of trenches they had drawn around us; they then resorted, as just related, to polite offers; and, not gaining anything by this, they tried to alarm us by a theatrical arrangement of trumpets, which, by sounding and repeating calls at various distances, were intended to indicate the presence of a very large force. This is a device which has been recorded in the military history of more than one campaign, and which did not succeed in its object.

They also added the most tremendous threats and (it is painful to record it) the vile impudence of a pack of traitors from our own army, who continually cried out that we had deceived the Detachment, that we were going to cause its ruin, that we were lost, and so on to the same effect; calling to the soldiers also that they should escape, that they should not persist in their folly, that they would only miserably perish in the church, that (leaving the officers to defend themselves if they wished) they should save their own lives, that they would be well treated, and that they would gain every advantage by deserting to the enemy's camp. Against this fire of words, strong walls and loopholes were, on the whole, useless; there was nothing for it but constant vigilance.

On the 18th a private, Julián Galvete Iturmendi, was severely wounded, and died on the 31st, in consequence of the wound. The Christian duties we owed to his remains necessi-

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tated the devotion of that enclosure to one more sad purpose—that of a cemetery.

On the 18th also we received a letter for the Politico-Military Governor and Friar Gómez Carreño. It was signed by a colleague of the latter, Friar Leoncio Gómez Platero. He advised us to surrender, urging us to give up our arms to the leader, Calixto Villacorta, to accept cheerfully the Katipúnan; adding that we would be treated with all manner of consideration and embarked immediately for Spain, as had already been the case with the rest of the detachments, almost all of which had surrendered without a fight. The letter was kindly written, with a certain eloquence of the kind used by death-bed confessors. It was not answered.

But the urgent communication that we received the following day, the 19th of July, from Villacorta, could not be treated in the same way. He said:

"I have just arrived, with the three columns of my command; and, aware of the useless resistance you are keeping up, I inform you that if you will lay down your arms within twenty-four hours, I shall respect your lives and property, treating you with every consideration. Otherwise, I shall force you to deliver them; I shall have compassion on no one; and shall hold the officers responsible for every fatality that may occur.

"Given at my headquarters, the 19th of July, 1898.

"Calixto Villacorta."

The following morning he was answered as follows:

"At midday to-day terminates the period fixed in your threat. The officers cannot be held responsible for the fatalities that occur. We are united in the determination to do our duty, and you are to understand that if you get possession of the church, it will be only when there is left in it nothing but dead bodies; death being preferable to dishonor."

And it was indeed true that we preferred death.

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IV.

FROM THE 20TH OF JULY TO THE 30TH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE FIRING INCREASES.—ARTILLERY OF THE DEFENSE.—LETTERS FROM THE ENEMY.—ARTILLERY OF THE SIEGE.—ANOTHER DESERTER.—ATTEMPTED ASSAULT.—RELIGIOUS MESSENGERS. — PROVIDENTIAL CHASTISEMENT. — CASUALTIES INCREASE.—THE BERI-BERI. — DEATH OF FRIAR CARRENO. —HEROISM OF ROVIRO.—LETTER FROM DUPUY DE LOME.— MORE PROOFS OF THE DISASTER.—IT CANNOT BE!

The constant fire of the enemy, at times furiously general and sustained, as though they were trying to suddenly annihilate us, to blot us out; and at other times slow and deliberate, as though they desired only to remind us of the extremity we had reached; the increasing casualties; the appearance of disease, the symptoms of which were very alarming; the annoying affliction of letters, warnings, and counsel; treason which never sleeps; and the melancholy situation of the Mother Country, which was becoming more and more clear to our eyes—make up the picture, so to speak, of the seventy-two days of the siege of which I shall treat in this chapter.

At twelve o'clock midday of the 20th the time fixed by Villacorta expired, and at that hour there broke forth from the whole of the enemy's line a most furious firing, which lasted until the following morning.

In order to economize in the expenditure of cartridges as well as to incite the enemy to assault, we had determined not to reply to his fire; but, observing our silence, Villacorta, instead of sending those "columns under his command," sent us

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another message, saying that he would not expend any more powder to no purpose, and that he would not raise the siege, even though it should be prolonged for three years. "I shall not leave Baler," he said, "until I have made you surrender." It is proper to observe that while we were reading about his purpose not to expend any more powder in vain, the firing was going on undiminished.

On our part, while we were firmly determined to economize ammunition, we did make an effort to furnish an accompaniment for that noise. We found in the church several old cannon. I do not know how old they were nor by what chain of circumstances they happened to be there. There were no vestiges of a gun-carriage nor any accessories. A singular expedient occurred to us; and since there was no powder for the cannon, it may be affirmed that we invented a kind of artillery.

We took some rockets to pieces and emptied some Remington cartridges; we mixed the explosives thus obtained; and, selecting one of the smallest guns, we put in it more than a sufficient quantity of the mixture and filled it to the muzzle with balls.

Carrying the gun thus prepared, by hand, to one of the loopholes we had made in the foundation wall of the convent (now our *corral*), we supported the muzzle in the loophole; and, using a strong rope for the purpose, we suspended the other end, by the cascabel, from one of the floor-beams that we had left in place. This allowed us to incline the plane of fire, after a fashion, and to that extent to get some sort of aim.

The piece being in place and our ears well stopped, we selected a bamboo from the longest we had, tied a piece of fuse to the end of it, set fire to it carefully, got as far away as we could, and then came surprise and noise enough! The result

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was something like the formidable blow of a battering-ram, the recoil of the piece being such that, darting from the loophole like a projectile, it struck the opposite wall, about eight feet away, with a blow that made the foundations tremble. "Fire! fire!" cried the *Insurrectos;* "but just wait until we get our cannon!"

Among the numerous messages, and we received them almost daily, it is proper to now mention one that was brought to us by two Spaniards. One of them was recognized by some of the soldiers who had belonged to Mota's detachment. "That one," they told us, "was a corporal in the veteran Guardia Civil and commanded the post at Carranglán. We saw him there when we passed through there in September on our way to Baler."

My comrade Alonso's servant, Jaime Caldentey, added that the man was a countryman and friend of his from Mallorca.

With him came another man, a very tall one, called "the standard-bearer." The Mallorcan probably did not have the enemy's full confidence, and for that reason the other was sent with him, to avoid indiscretions. Alonso ordered Jaime that, speaking Mallorcan, he should invite "the standard-bearer" to join us, telling him that we had an abundance of supplies and means of defense.

The servant obeyed; but the other, pretending that he did not understand the Mallorcan dialect, replied in a loud voice that he had parents, brothers, and great love for his country; that he did not abandon hope of seeing them; and that he was very sure that if we persisted in the defense, we should all perish, because, all the Peninsular forces having surrendered, we could receive no help and were lost.

On hearing these words I could not contain myself, and said to him angrily: "You are the one that is lost; and now

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take yourself away from here." Perhaps I should have remained silent; but I leave it to anyone to judge whether or not his answers were enough to arouse indignation, although they may have been made only for the sound or for the way they might strike the ears of the soldiers.

On the 31st Villacorta wrote us again, saying that if by the following day (August 1st) we did not surrender, he would resort to cannon fire and would bring our refuge to the ground, showing mercy to no one. They had, it seems, received some guns; but we soon discovered that they were probably of the same types as those we had.

It is needless to say that they were enabled to do great damage to the walls of the church. This fact may well serve as a commentary on those who have affirmed, surely talking at random, that we in the church at Baler had no serious attacks to withstand.

As Villacorta threatened so he did. No sooner had twelve o'clock arrived that same night than from three directions at the same time, from the south, east, and west, the cannonade commenced; although, fortunately, without other damage than the destruction visited on the doors and roof. The doors were not splintered, but the bundles of blankets that we had used in covering them were sent flying through the air, opening a free passage for the balls and canister which, from all sides, were rained against the doors. The damage done to the roof left us all but completely exposed to the weather.

On August 3d we lost another man by desertion, the servant Jaime, who carried away with him his arms, ammunition, and equipments. He accomplished this while he was a sentry at the window to the right of the altar, from which he jumped to the ground; and it was supposed that he deserted because of a reprimand he had recently received from Alonso, who had found

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him playing cards. That may have been the reason, but it is as likely that he conceived the idea, and perhaps said so, at the time he had the conversation in Mallorcan.

This occurrence came very near being the occasion of a catastrophe. Alonso had an idea that the enemy could easily set fire to the church from the north side, where there was only one sentinel posted on the wall, and he was not careful to keep that idea to himself. Taking possession of his mind as it did, and not without reason, it was frequently the theme of conversation between us.

His rascally servant, as it soon appeared, did not forget to communicate it to someone who could make use of the information. The result, as we very soon experienced, was an attack, four days later, on that north wall.

The enemy tried to surprise us and brought with him everything necessary for setting fire to the building. There was a heavy increase in the firing on the north side of the church, while a party were raising a ladder and trying to gain the wall. Their success would have been the beginning of our ruin.

Fortunately, they placed the ladder right next to where the sentry was posted. The cry of alarm rang out. Hurrying to the point of danger, we had a lively little fight on our hands, the enemy displaying a tenacity of purpose that was quite unexpected.

As the enemy's obstinacy was great, and as the assault gave signs of continuing longer than was desirable, it occurred to us to feign a sally. The trumpeter was ordered to sound the attack vigorously. Lieutenant Alonso, his voice ringing above the tumult, cried, "To Hernandez' house!" (one of the fortified houses); and then, by delivering a very rapid fire, we succeeded in intimidating the rebels, who betook themselves to flight in such haste that some of them threw themselves from

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the top of the ladder, abandoning it and leaving behind the rags and petroleum with which they had provided themselves for the conflagration.

The attack was repulsed, but the cannon and rifle fire continued from the enemy's trenches. They left us the ladder; but, as we could not leave the church to get it, we could do nothing with it but suspend it securely from a roof-beam, so that they could neither utilize it nor carry it away.

On the 15th, the Assumption of Our Lady, Private Pedro Planas Basagañas was wounded. On the 20th Villacorta asked us for a short parley, sending to us the priest of Casiguran, Friar Juan López Guillén, who was followed in a short time by another curate, of the same parish, Friar Félix Minaya.

Both of these priests did all they could to incline us to surrender, without adding any new arguments to those we had already heard so often, but strengthening them with all the coloring their eloquence could supply.

They were not at all successful, and Las Morenas agreed to allow them to remain with us. I am ignorant of the motives that prompted this resolution, but I must suppose that they were not merely capricious; because, on account of the scarcity of rations in our possession, we were not in position for an increase of useless mouths to feed.

These two priests remained with us until the capitulation. After the latter had been concluded, the Tagálogs said that they needed the priests for religion. The priests accordingly remained with them, to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

A pleasing piece of news, if the chastisement of a criminal can be a pleasure, reached us through these priests. Jaime Caldentey, whose treachery must have incited the assault that came so near putting an end to the defense, had been killed; and this had happened at a moment when he was showing his animosity toward us.

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On the day following his desertion to the enemy he wished to fire a cannon against us, and in attempting to do so he fell, shot through by one of our projectiles.

In the course of human events there are often coincidences so strange that they cause even the least believing, the most skeptical, to reflect upon the supreme judgments of an inexorable justice, the justice of Divine Providence.

From the 20th of August to the 25th of September there were no extraordinary events to record. The firing continued and we had some wounded, but none seriously.

On September 25th the "intruder" of which I have before spoken, and of which I said that the more we attempted to prevent all entrance the more we facilitated his ravages, made known, by claiming his first victim, his inevitable appearance among us.

The fatigues of the siege, the scarcity and bad condition of our rations, the persistent and ever-present anxiety, the vitiated air and the other very bad hygienic conditions to which we were subjected, the constant firing, the insufficient policing and cleaning, were bound to produce, under that burning sky and those humid winds, the fatal epidemic against which we had no defense.

The disease which now attacked us is a terrible one, not only in its termination, but also on account of the steady advance it makes as it goes on devouring, so to speak, and annihilating its victim. It is called beri-beri. It begins its invasions through the lower extremities, which it swells and renders useless, covering them with loathsome tumefactions. The attack is preceded by excessive debility and convulsive tremblings. It goes on rising and rising until, when in its development it reaches certain organs, it produces death with frightful sufferings.

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The former priest of Baler, Friar Cándido Gómez Carreño, was its first victim. He died September 25th, the seventy-seventh day of the siege, and the day when we had the first definite news of the surrender of Manila, which we learned through an artifice of the enemy.

While Carreño was dying a parley sounded, and there presented himself one Pedro Aragon, an inhabitant of Baler and known as "the husband of Cenaida," begging to be allowed to speak to the priest. He informed us that he had been a prisoner at Manila, having been implicated in the attack on Mota's detachment; but that he had been set at liberty on the surrender of the city, and that he was ordered to tell about it, and other important matters, to the priest, in order to see if he could convince us, and if we would surrender.

He was told that Friar Cándido was ill and could not see him, but that he could wait and could speak to the priest Juan López. He said, "Very well," and waited a short time, during which he began to weep; and, the priest not appearing, the man began to suspect something wrong, and went away at a run.

On September 30th the dysentery killed another soldier, Francisco Rovira Mompó, who, for his bravery and excellence of character, was deserving of a better fate.

This valiant man was grievously ill, with his legs useless because he was also suffering with beri-beri, when, on one occasion, the firing of the enemy became so heavy that we all thought an assault was impending. He attempted to rise, but could not stand. He then dragged himself along the ground and placed himself near a hole in one of the doors. There he fixed his bayonet and, stretched on the ground, waited for the adversary to present himself.

All this time proofs of the misfortunes that had come to

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the Mother Country continued to multiply. On this same day, the 30th, we received a letter from the Civil Governor of Nueva Ecija, Señor Dupuy de Lome, in which he informed us of the loss of the Philippines. Las Morenas himself, who said he knew Señor de Lome, could do no less than acknowledge that if he had, under other circumstances, received such a letter asking him for money, he would have sent it without hesitating a single moment; because the writing, with which he said he was acquainted, was no doubt genuine.

Following this came rumors of the surrender of Major Don Juan Génova Iturbide, of Captain Don Federico Ramiro de Toledo, and of others whom I do not now recall. A little while later they informed us that Major Ceballos, stationed at Dagúpan, had surrendered with fifty rifles; that General Augustí had surrendered in Manila because his wife was a prisoner in the hands of the Tagálogs; and of other events of this kind.

The series closed with a letter from the curate of Palanan, Friar Mariano Gil Atienza, summing up and confirming all, and telling us that the Archipelago was lost; that there was now no reason for our further defense; and that we ought immediately to lay down our arms, without fear or suspicion, because we would be treated with every consideration.

It must be confessed that so much and such diverse testimony might have been more than enough to convince anybody of the truth of the stories. But we knew that the enemy, because of their self-conceit, were eager to bring about our surrender; and this idea confirmed us in the belief that all we had heard was imaginary, falsified, concocted to deceive us.

For this reason, when they told us that they had with them a number of those who had surrendered, we replied that those persons should be brought out so that we might see them;

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which they refused, saying that what we wished was to shut up our friends with us, as we had the friars. On this account we gave credit neither to the letter from the Governor of Nueva Ecija, nor to official reports, nor to anything else. We could not conceive that our dominion could be so easily lost. We were unable to admit even the possibility of a fall so rapid and so astounding as that.

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V.

FROM THE 1ST OF OCTOBER TO THE 22D OF NOVEMBER.

THE WOUNDED. — DEATH OF MY COMRADE ALONSO. — I TAKE COMMAND OF THE DETACHMENT.—HYGIENIC MEASURES.— NOCTURNAL ROUNDS. — NEW WARNINGS. — CASUALTIES. — WOODEN SHOES.—DEATH OF CAPTAIN DON ENRIQUE LAS MORENAS.—THE SITUATION.

The beginning of the autumn of 1898 was a sad one for us. Nature, which in those lands displays generous luxuriance, could not present itself to our sight with those golden tints which in other lands are precursors of the melancholy days of November; not a single leaf fell from the trees that had not been cut off by the bullets we were exchanging with the enemy —the firing heavy at times and deliberate at others, but always kept up; not a single bird of the kinds that announce the winter migration was to be seen flying through the air; but there, among ourselves, coincident, though sadly, with the autumn of other lands, began another kind of decay, a decay most distressing.

A corpse-like pallor, the consequence of fatigue and hunger, was beginning to mark us all, the symptom of a certain decay that would soon mean the grave; the inexplicable chill that benumbed us passed over us at times; and in action, speech, and look it was plain that the few sparks of hope which had sustained us were expiring.

On the 9th of October Corporal José Olivares Conejero, and on the 10th his comrade, Corporal José Chaves Martin, and Private Ramón Donant Pastor, died of beri-beri, passing

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to the better life sanctified by the sufferings of martyrs. On the 13th the doctor, Señor Vigil, was seriously wounded. I also was slightly wounded, as was Private Ramón Mir Brils, who thus a second time attained this sacrifice for his country.

But the 18th was still more melancholy and sad for us all. The second lieutenant, Don Juan Alonso Zayas, succumbed to the epidemic, which had now, with this never-to-be-forgotten comrade, taken the fourth part of its victims. Alonso was an excellent soldier, cast in the mold of heroes, a good comrade, and his loss oppressed us bitterly.

It now fell to me to take command of the force, a command which I retained until the first of September, 1899, when we disembarked at Barcelona.

The enemy, always on the lookout for any signs of negligence, required much attention; but the beri-beri developed so alarmingly that there remained of us only a half-dozen who were not infected. It was necessary to combat it, and to do so without delay, with the urgency demanded by a question of life or death. I turned, therefore, and immediately, to the sanitation of the church.

The principal need was ventilation, to carry off the infection deposited in the lower strata of that air little less than irrespirable, corrupted as it was by so many pernicious emanations; and it was necessary to secure ventilation without prejudicing the security of the defense.

To this end I caused the barricade to be cleared away from the south door; and behind this, at the distance of half a meter, forming a passageway, we placed three wine-casks on top of a thick board, and on top of these a row of chests filled with earth, as were also the casks. On these, and quite covering the opening, we placed bundles of blankets, solidly propped. Two holes made in the door, near the ground and opposite the

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openings left purposely between the casks, permitted ventilation from below, and others opened at a suitable height served the same purpose from above, as well as for the no less important loopholes. In order to remove as far away as possible the various accumulations of filth, the decomposition of which was extremely dangerous to health, I caused a small opening to be made in the wall of the *corral* and arranged a urinal to carry off the excreta.

These and other measures were not much, but they were of pressing necessity. Such was the extremity to which we had been reduced that we were obliged for the needs of the defense to make use of those even who were suffering from the epidemic; and, since none of them could stand, to carry them in our arms to their respective posts as sentinels. There we placed them on chairs, or something as a substitute, and left them for six hours, in order to economize reliefs. We managed the reliefs in the same way, carrying the old reliefs, one by one, from their posts to the bed.

Years have passed, and I have again become surrounded with the ordinary circumstances of life where exertion is commensurate with ordinary human conditions, limited as they are; and I must confess that I, although day after day a witness, an actor, a stimulator of such effort, have very often doubted whether it was all a dream of knightly fiction instead of a positive reality. Six long hours with the rifle ready, the legs useless, the suffering acute and constantly increasing, and those men appeared to be contented!

While Lieutenant Alonso was yet able, we took turns in watching at night; he taking one night with Las Morenas and I the next with the doctor, Señor Vigil, who devoted himself to everything and was everywhere, setting an example of self-abnegation and bravery. But when Alonso died, and I saw that

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Las Morenas must succumb to the weakness he was suffering, I abandoned this kind of watch and established the following, which was much more practical and which gave better results: One of the three remained always on watch, relieving each other as we conveniently could; and it was not always that we could get sleep, because if Las Morenas was very ill, so was Vigil suffering from a severe wound. The corporal of the relief alternating with the soldiers on duty made the rounds of the sentinels every five minutes, or, rather, in turn, one after the other, each when the other had returned.

As the sentinels were almost all posted in elevated positions, and as it was necessary to avoid making their positions known to the enemy, their posts were called in a low tone, thus: to the one that was on the wall behind the altar, "Altar"; to the one at its right, "Right"; and so on. Each sentry replied in a low tone and bending over, so as not to be heard from the outside, and so as to prevent his position from being discovered and thus making known the weak places proper for assault. This was necessary also to guard against the enemy's approaching cautiously for the purpose of finding out who was on guard and where posted, which could have been very easily done for the simple reason that the deserters knew us all by our voices.

For these reasons there was maintained throughout the night a silence that was truly sepulchral, and absolute darkness. It seemed like a stage filled with phantoms, the stillness broken only by the movements of the one who was making the rounds, his suppressed questions, and the kind of convulsive sobs which served as answers.

It is to be borne in mind that the thing that troubled most was the work of seduction which the enemy tried in every way to accomplish. I have already noted the cries and induce-

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ments by means of which they had tried to lure away our soldiers, who, after all, were only men, and as such had their moments of weakness. I had therefore to forbid all personal communication that the enemy might seek, and this was one of the powerful reasons impelling us to such extreme vigilance.

During these same days the deserters were announcting that Villacorta had appointed as secretary our Hospital Corps corporal, and that he had made my former servant, Felipe Herrero López, a captain. All this might be true or false; but, although it was more likely the latter, it was very dangerous to have it reach our soldiers by way of private confidence.

It was not long before the *Insurrectos* again wrote to us, laying great stress on the end of our dominion in the Philippines and trying to attract us with the promise of embarking us immediately for Spain. We replied that, according to the laws and usages of war in cases like the present, the vanquished were allowed six months for the evacuation of the territory; that they should be patient; apparently, we were left to be among the last to be concentrated, the Captain-General knowing, as he surely must know, "the large amount of provisions, ammunition, and supplies" that we had at our disposal.

To this they replied that we could not hope for any concentration by our generals, because, since the breaking out of hostilities with the Americans, they had no longer looked after the detachments; and that there was nothing left for us but immediate surrender. It was indeed feared that this might be so; but we replied, as we should have replied, that "no army on abandoning a territory could forget its forces that were compromised in the field."

Two more deaths from beri-beri (one, that of Private José Lafarga, on the 22d, and the other, that of Private Román López Lozano, on the 25th) completed our list for that sad

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month of October, with the addition of the wounding of Private Miguel Pérez Leal, which occurred on the 23d.

By this time the force had become shoeless. If some individuals, very few, had not reached the point of going about with bare feet, covering them only with rags, the remains of the soles being persistently sewn together again and again, what they wore, if it served for anything, it was certainly not for what shoes usually serve, but rather to accentuate their wretchedness.

Believing that this condition might contribute to the progress of the epidemic, through the humidity of the ground, they conceived the idea of making a kind of clog, not very beautiful, but quickly made and sufficiently serviceable. They were fashioned out of pieces of wood, and fastened to the foot as well as might be with packthread or cord. They were not very comfortable, but they kept the feet from contact with the soil.

And now came the month of November, consecrated to the dead by its initial *fiesta* and its sorrows, and which we also were to consecrate almost exclusively to the dead. In its first half alone four more soldiers died of beri-beri. In the second half we had to lament another and more grievous loss, which left in my hands as a matter of duty and right what I had already exercised for some days through necessity and misfortune.

On the 8th the mournful filing off began with the death of Private Juan Fuentes Damián, followed the next day by his companions, Baldomero Larrode Paracuellos and Manuel Navarro León; and after these, on the 14th, died Pedro Izquierdo y Arnáiz; all passing through horrible agonies, having no other consolation than that of dying under the Spanish flag, which, dirty and in rags, was fluttering in the breeze from the bell-tower of the church.

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None of them were buried with ecclesiastical ceremonies, but to none was wanting the merit of patient suffering. Neither the temple nor the men were clothed in black for the departed; but even yet my soul is afflicted with the supreme mourning which oppressed us in the ceremonies, without ceremony, of interment.

The gloomy impression, apart from the natural sadness, was increased by the thought, which we could not shake off, that there, in these same graves where we were placing the mortal remains of our companions, we might ourselves, one by one, soon join them in very close assembly.

As the month advanced the sufferings of Las Morenas, aggravated by the hardships we were undergoing, began to take on an alarming gravity, with the presence and complication of beri-beri. He continued, however, to authenticate with his signature the replies that we gave to the messages and threats of the besiegers. "It diverts me," he said; and, respecting his desire, we continued to receive and read the messages and to answer them.

That this proceeding was a mistake, seeing that it was our resolve not to surrender, was each time more evident, because of the evil effect that it produced on the troops, and because the enemy could not fail to observe the sore plight we were in.

Precaution could avail little to prevent this last, and yet it was important to avoid it. We had already determined that we would not go out to the trenches to receive papers or deliver replies unless dressed in the little best that we had. Our bodies testified to hunger, but it was not glaringly evident, since our emaciation could be caused by the close confinement in which we were living. They could not actually know what were our casualties, although they might guess them; but there was some difference between knowing and guessing.

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When the death of Captain Las Morenas became inevitable and imminent; when I realized that very soon he would not be able to write, and that the substitution of another name for his would probably lead to grave consequences: wishing, moreover, to not make my signature known, since they might, perchance, by imitating it, give it out that we had surrendered*—I sought to find a pretext that would put an end to every kind of parleys and messages.

This was, in fact, the object of the message we directed to the *Insurrectos* on the 20th of November, and which was the last one signed by the almost dying Captain. Feigning in this letter the greatest generosity and clemency, and imitating to a certain extent a vulgar scene from the Italian farce, we offered them complete amnesty of their rebellion and lawless acts. "In order to make it clear to you once more," we said, "that the Spaniards are actuated by philanthropic sentiments, if you will abandon your attitude and lay down your arms, everything will remain in oblivion and the inhabitants will be allowed to return to the town at once."

*And I was not mistaken. Afterwards I learned that in December, 1898, an expedition was fitted out in Manila for the purpose of relieving us. It was all ready prepared to set out when the arrival of Corporal Alfonso Sus Fojas, Medical Corps, prevented its departure.

This miserable deserter had the effrontery to go in and claim his pay, declaring that we had surrendered some time before, naming the place to which we had been taken, stating that we were all cared for, and giving many details that gave credit to his inventive faculty. Naturally, he did not say that he had deserted to the enemy, abandoning us June 28th, taking with him the hospital man under his orders, and I do not know how he explained his being at liberty; but it is a fact that his story was believed—and the column did not depart.

Some days later it became known that we were still defending ourselves; the man was sought for in vain, the said Fojas did not appear, but the sending of help remained in the air.

Even this did not prevent credit being given afterwards to another of our deserters, José Alcáide Bayona, who even went so far as to accuse us of assassination and mutiny.

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This message was, I repeat, neither the fantastic pretensions of vain boasting, nor an exalted flight of the imagination; much less, as the facts have shown, an attempt to get an opportunity to reply to them: "If you will not surrender to us, we, more generous, will surrender to you." It was written solely and simply for the purpose of receiving the answer they sent us.

They had taken us in earnest, and their reply was a litany of insults which need not be reproduced in these pages. It was natural for them to give vent to their spleen. "Las Morenas," they said finally, "what inhabitants are left to return to the town? Do you wish the Igorrotes to come to occupy it? Why this pardon and amnesty? There is nothing for you to do but to surrender." These people did not realize when they wrote those lines that they were a sad statement of the condition of the unfortunate Las Morenas and of the critical pass we had come to.

The poor Captain was leaving us fast, a victim, as were the others, of beri-beri. His agony was horrible; he had not lost consciousness completely; he was still conscious of the fact that he was in a siege; constantly, which increased his anguish, he thought he was with his own people, but with the enemy in sight. Once he began to cry out, trembling and frightened, "Little Henry! Little Henry!" (one of his sons), and, turning to me sobbing, "Order them to go back and look for the child. Quickly! The *Insurrectos* are going to take him."

He died on the 22d, during the afternoon. He had a good heart, too simple perhaps; and the Country has been just to him. His memory will never be blotted from mine. God keep him in peace.

As there was now no other lieutenant left, I had immediately and officially to assume the command, with all its incidents and dangers. For some days the command had practically

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been mine, but now the circumstances could not but be aggravated and the difficulties seriously increased by our recent loss. I well knew what was expected of me in the future, if I grew not disheartened on the way, which was yet very long and thorny. But I was still in good health, and I did not falter in my determination for a single instant.

It was now the one hundred and forty-fifth day of the siege. There remained under my command thirty-five privates, a trumpeter, and three corporals, almost all of them ill. To care for these sick men, I had only one doctor and one Hospital Corps man. To feed them, I had a few sacks of flour, all fermented and forming a tough mass, and a few other sacks that had contained chick peas, but now had nothing in them but dust and weevil; not a scrap of beef, that from Australia having been used up during the first week in July; a few pieces of bacon, swarming with maggots and, moreover, repugnant to the taste; a very little very bad coffee; of wine, which had been finished in August, only the casks; of beans, a very few, and bad; plenty of sugar, but not a grain of salt (which we could, however, have easily had while we were yet trading with the people of the town), which we had been in want of ever since we shut ourselves up in the church; and some tins of badly damaged sardines.

This was all very little, considering the progress of the epidemic, the fatigues of the siege, and the remoteness of any possible relief. But we still had enough ammunition, a flag to defend while there was a cartridge left, and a sacred depository, that of the remains of our dead comrades, to guard against profanation by the enemy. It was possible for us to resist, and we resisted.

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SECOND PERIOD.

From November 23, 1898, to June 2, 1899.

I.

FROM NOVEMBER 23D TO DECEMBER 13TH.

NO PARLEYS.—DAILY MERRY-MAKINGS.—CHAMIZO LUCAS.—FIESTA OF THE PATRON SAINT.—NOCTURNAL GRAZINGS.—FIRING AND STONE-THROWING.—PRECAUTIONS.—THE DOCTOR ILL. — FOF SOMETHING GREEN. — PRELUDE TO THE OTHER WORLD.—PRECAUTIONS.

On the 23d the enemy again sought a parley. Not wishing to receive it, I ordered the "retreat" to be sounded; but, in case they might not understand this answer, or did not wish to understand it, I went up into the choir to warn the sentinels not to fire in case anyone should present himself.

It was not long before a native appeared with a white flag in one hand and a message in the other. I cried out to him from above to go away, that we would not receive any more messages; and my words frightened him so much that he darted away, throwing himself head first into the trench and pitching the rejected letter and the despised white flag in ahead of him.

I continued to refuse to receive flags of truce. But since this might cause the enemy to suspect that it was due to the discouragement of the soldiers, and as these same communications, dangerous as they might be, often brought us something from the outside, and always something new, which relieved the tedium that was oppressing and consuming us, I thought to deceive the enemy and at the same time to raise our spirits and divert our minds by devoting some portion of the time to merry-makings, which, although forced, might cover up the

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real situation to those both within and without the church, and also enliven our minds and hide our anguish.

These so-called merry-makings consisted of hand-clappings, merry cries, and snatches of song, which angered the enemy and made him cry out, "Sing away! you will soon have to weep"; and which kindled in us the recollection of other and happy days, and of that Country to which perhaps we would never return.

Recollections so bitter! Comedy! pure comedy! in which we forced ourselves to be actors in spite of our wills, which opposed it. Painful recollections! but which, nevertheless, truly strengthened us.

In order to celebrate those merry-makings, those masks of laughter with which we tried to cover our faces, corroded already as with cancer, I ordered out into the *corral* every afternoon all persons not on duty, whether sick or well, as long as they could move their hands, sing a verse, or contribute in any way to the hilarity.

As already said, this maddened the enemy, who exhausted his repertory of insults and threats, and tried to reduce us to silence by redoubling his fire. But he only succeeded in stimulating us, for the simple reason that all his vociferation and firing acted on us as a sort of provocation, a sort of stimulant, like the excitement that warms one up, in a contest of skill.

Meanwhile the completion of the enemy's trenches and the advantage gained by him in fortifying some houses near the church were putting us in serious plight, especially on the western side, where some of the houses just referred to were not more than forty paces away.

We were running out of wood also; and, although it was close at hand, since only the walls of the *corral* separated us from the place where it had fallen when we tore down the walls of the convent, we could not go out to gather it.

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The need of wood and the advantage gained by the enemy, as just explained, urgently demanded the adoption of some measure of relief. To conceive it was easy, the destruction of those houses would afford it. But is was a dangerous undertaking. A private soldier whose name deserves a high place, Juan Chamizo Lucas, conquered this difficulty by his heroism.

Taking advantage of one of those rare moments of truce or lassitude, when the enemy appeared to be careless, that brave boy cautiously stole out, and with incredible coolness and deliberation set fire to the houses through the very loopholes from which projected the enemy's rifles.

Before he went out, I took the precaution to post the most skillful marksmen that could be spared, so as to cover all the western front, in case the enemy should try to capture him or to mutilate his body in the very probable event of misfortune overtaking him. But, fortunately, when they discovered that the houses were burning, Chamizo had already returned and was covered by the trench of the sacristy, and it was necessary to oppose them only to keep them from putting out the fire.

They were unable to prevent the spread of the fire, which, reaching other houses, completely destroyed that of Hernandez. The latter was the same house that we pretended we were going to make use of on the night of the assault, and was one of those they had fortified and in which they had placed some cannon. With these guns they had easily been able to ruin the sacristy, which was built entirely of wood.

Owing to this exploit, we succeeded in weakening that part of the attack where Nature itself appeared eager to guard us from the enemy's vigilance. There was no moving about in the space lying between the church and the enemy's line of trenches. The whole was a thicket of banana plants and other trees, jalaps, gourd vines, and other plants of paradisiacal ex-

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uberance and foliage. That marvelous soil, made fruitful by the continuous rains of the season through which we were passing, had gone on raising up before our eyes a beautiful picture on a delicate carpet of appetizing small herbs.

I say "appetizing" because we so fared with the provisions we had, and they were so repugnant to us, that those plants, offering themselves so near at hand, shining fruits and varied flowers, the herbs with their adornment of dew, their abundance of oxygen, and the freshness with which they appeared to be saturated, presented themselves in our present necessity with all the seduction of a most coveted dainty.

This boscage was very abundant in the belt of the burned fortified houses and on the north side of the church; but, although the growth was somewhat close and sufficient to conceal a man, it was not desirable to authorize the soldiers to gather any of it. And this because not only of the enemy's fire, but also to guard against happenings of another kind. Only Vigil and I, secretly because it appeared a shame to thus gratify our own wants, occasionally slipped through the opening in the door, silently and furtively stole out of the trench, and—ate grass!

This banquet of ruminants might have been of heavy cost to us; because, such was the readiness of the enemy that, having at last discovered us, they sent after us a charge of canister that, if it had not been for their stupidity, would have put an end to our digestion. The fact that the rammer stuck in the tower of the church indicates how precipitate they were in firing.

On the 8th of December we had another death from beriberi, that of Private Rafael Alonso Medero. Nevertheless, as it was the day so generally observed by the Spanish Infantry, and as it was desirable to dissipate the evil effect of the new

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loss, I ordered pancakes and coffee made for the troops, giving, besides, a tin of sardines to each man. This modest repast was of much value. I have already described the bad state of the rations, but anything that interrupted the daily monotony with an appearance of novelty and alleviation comforted our souls. Hence, even though the *buñuelos* (pancakes) turned out to be veritable *"Buñuelos"* (nothings), the coffee a poor substitute for wine, and each tin of sardines a mere serviceable trifle, everything was taken as extraordinarily tempting, as everything in this world is relative; and the garrison of Baler worthily celebrated the festival of its Immaculate Patroness in a religious way, by the sepulture of the dead comrade and prayers for the repose of his soul; in a secular way, by the simulacrum of a banquet; and in a military way, by a stolid resignation to everything.

In the *Insurrecto* camp they must have, evidently, been devising, not a serious, open, and determined attack, which would undoubtedly have annihilated us, but a plan whereby, while they sailed to the windward of the danger of a frontal attack, we should be brought to terms by means of intimidation and discouragement. Hence the noise with which they then began to accompany their attacks. The noise of their cannon, which was already loud enough, not being enough for them, they adopted the plan of accompanying it with terrific howls and showers of stones, which, falling on the roof, covered with zinc and not very firm, deafened us with their hellish pounding.

The shameful thing about that incessant hammering, that continual dropping of artifices and tricks and insults and offerings and promises, was the conspicuous part that our infamous deserters took in it all. There was no yelling in which the voices of those wretches did not stand out; no enterprise in which, before our very eyes, they were not eager to display

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their villainy, trying to gain merit, to gain reward and the consideration of the enemy, which, apparently, was not showered upon them.

We would have preferred the open assault, with all its dangerous chances, because we were anxious to "make a killing," to satiate our anger, our wrath, which was perforce repressed day after day, without relief other than by a desultory fire, which was not always without result, but was of no perceptible efficacy. Although the effect of our fire was concealed by the undergrowth and by the trenches, yet we knew by the quickness of the response that we had made good; but we were in such a state of desperation from our imprisonment, and from continual worry and vexation, that we should have liked to see the effect, the casualties caused by our bullets, more closely, as we saw our friends dying and heard their lamentations and anguish.

To this end I ordered that after each meal the troops should post themselves, well concealed, at the loopholes, and that the mess call should then be sounded. Up to that time we had not used the trumpet except to sound the "parley" and the "attack"; but, although they might consider the mess call as a useless formality, it seemed to me that it might also occur to them, on hearing the call, that they would be able to effect a surprise while we were occupied with the duties to which it summoned us. This artifice gave me no result, since it served them more as a caution, and we did not get the satisfaction we so ardently desired.

I have already described the manner in which we performed the night watch, and I now must add that neither did the enemy neglect similar precautions. Instead of the watchword for the sentries, a whistle was used and repeated by one sentinel after the other; and, as it was very brief, we could not locate it for a shot.

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Our low state, the failure of my stratagem, and the absolute necessity of rescuing the Detachment from the terrible marasmus into which I saw them sinking, induced me to plan a sally, which, in addition to animating our people, would allow us to gather some of those beautiful pumpkins hanging so near and in such tantalizing abundance. But I deferred my plan, deciding to carry it out and have the pumpkins on Christmas Eve.

My object was to set fire to the whole town, to profit by the confusion and seize the fruits, to show that we were alive, and to get up a hunting party after *Insurrectos*.

The enterprise having been determined upon, the 23d of of December was fixed upon as the day for carrying it out. But I had to anticipate that date. The fatal epidemic, continuing to spread, attacked the Doctor, who was now prostrated and awaiting death seated in a chair, in order to care for his sick until the last moment. On the 13th he said to me: "Martin, I am dying; I am very ill. If someone could get me something green, perhaps I would get better, and so would these other sick men." "You know," I replied, "that I had planned a sally for the day before Christmas Eve; but since we cannot wait until then, I wish to say that I shall attempt it at once."

He generously tried to dissuade me, fearing disaster in our eagerness. But I saw that he was failing steadily, and, in spite of his strong protests, I answered that there was nothing else to do and that it would be done, come what would; because if we did not do something, the epidemic would devour us.

So true was this, so certain the ravages of the epidemic, that the soldiers were already making lists which they called "expeditions to the other world." In these they placed, first the names of those who were already about to die, then those

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less seriously ill, and so on in this order. When any one reached a crisis, his comrades would say to him, "It is your turn to be buried in such a place," and he with cool and marvelous resignation would bequeath five *pesos* to those who would make his grave.

It was frightful to hear them, there in the gloomy shades, half clad in rags, dirty, hungry, with so many memories of the kind that moisten the eyes with the tears of the spirit, and yet with so much of greatness in their prostration and wretchedness.

Many of those men must be still living. What has become of them? Perhaps again they find themselves in poverty and rags, with their strength gone, because they were not succored, and do not have in their misery even the right to the shelter of some asylum!

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II.

FROM THE 14TH TO THE 24TH OF DECEMBER.

THE SALLY. — GAINING ROOM. — PROVISIONS. — SOWING AND REAPING. — STOPPING HOLES AND AVOIDING FLOODS. — A TEMPEST. — NEW LINES OF TRENCHES. — CHRISTMAS EVE.

The sally which I had promised Vigil, come what would, and at once, presented its troubles and difficulties in the highest degree dangerous, and I was fully alive to them. My people available for the enterprise did not amount to twenty persons, the enemy being out of all proportion more numerous. Our men must expose themselves openly, while the enemy could wait for them under the cover of trenches. My men were weak and torpid, the *Insurrectos* in the best of condition. It seemed truly a piece of madness, but in the sacrifice I could see a ray of hope made certain by the very rashness of the undertaking.

In all circumstances of life surprise is of immense effect, the effect being the more powerful as it is accompanied by the extraordinary and the unexpected, the boldness displayed. To surprise I trusted the attainment of my purposes, and to it I owed their complete realization.

On the day following my conversation with the Doctor, December 14th, at half past ten or eleven in the morning, a most unusual hour for such an enterprise, I called Corporal José Olivares Conejeros, a man of great courage and completely in my confidence, and ordered him to take fourteen of the most suitable men; to go out with them secretly, crawling one by one, the only way possible, through the opening that led into the trench of the sacristy; and, when all were ready, the

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bayonets being fixed without noise, to make a sudden rush, deployed as skirmishers, and surround the house that was on the north side of the church.

One of the men, carrying long pieces of bamboo and some rags well soaked in petroleum, was to set fire to the house; the others to fight desperately and resolutely. The rest of the force, which I posted at the loopholes, were to support the attack, to increase the confusion by their firing, to cause as many losses as possible, and to prevent the putting out of the fires.

Everything was carried out as planned, and with results that were so necessary to us. I tried to pick off the sentry who was on post at the house referred to, and was well entrenched; but he very soon saw my men and fled, blind with fear and spreading consternation among his own people.

The flames themselves, the rapidity with which they spread through the town, the impetuosity of the charge, the precision of the fire which we poured into them from the church (although we tried to avoid the useless expenditure of ammunition), and the irresistible terror that was communicated from one to another, promptly decided a general flight, which cleared the field in less time than it takes to tell the story.

Apart from the surprise, which had just produced one of those miracles such as are related in the military history of all time, there were two powerful reasons, two fixed notions, latent in the Filipino mind, which no doubt contributed to the result: one was the traditional one of Spanish superiority, which we had just demonstrated; the other was the violence, the fury, with which they must have considered us possessed.

It is proper to note what we have just said; because it may be asserted that if, in other places, and on other occasions, care had been taken to encourage these notions, care not to foresee unfortunate occurrences, care to avoid weakness, to proceed

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with energetic resolution, other and very different from those we now have to lament would have been the results obtained.

Those people had formed a very superior conception of the *Castila* (Spaniard); and this conception, of which we ought never to have been careless, would have been worth much to us. In the instance of which I am speaking it decided that precipitate flight, which did not stop even at the forest. Think, now, what it would have logically meant in other and more favorable circumstances, with greater forces and resources, and with objects of much greater moment and transcendency.

On account of the great confusion, we could not estimate the enemy's losses, but I suppose they were not wanting. I have since heard that one of their leaders, Gómez Ortiz, he of the time of the suspension of hostilities, was killed. One of their sentries, stationed on the south, was killed and remained where he fell, abandoned by his friends. The flames of the fire, passing over him, destroyed his body in a short time.

The town was destroyed, except a few of the more distant houses, which we left standing, so that in case any troops should come to relieve us, the necessary lodgings for them would not be wanting.

We proceeded at once to destroy the trenches that surrounded us so near at hand; and, as the fire had razed the fortified houses which served as flanks and points of support, we soon cleared a regular military zone of sufficient width to allow us to open the doors in the south face of the church, which had been closed since the beginning of the siege.

A fringe of woods had intervened to shut us off from view and command of the inlet, or river, which cut the road to the beach. This way was of great use to the enemy, who at all hours were ascending and descending the stream, bringing food and reinforcements.

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It was necessary to make such traffic difficult at least; and to this end we cut a clearing which opened the river to our view and, while it did not hinder the traffic completely, yet subjected it to risks from our fire.

To this advantageous expansion, which, aside from bettering our local condition, afforded us freedom for offensive returns, we had the satisfaction of adding a good supply of pumpkins, pumpkin leaves, and all the savory fruit of the orange trees in the *plaza*—whatever might be, or appeared to us to be, edible. Neither did we overlook the boards and beams that we could carry to the church, in which we also stored the ladder that had been left behind the night of the assault and the iron material that could be picked up among the ruins of the *Comandancia*. This building having been of wood, we found a goodly supply of spikes, some of them a half-meter long, which were afterwards of much use to us, and which, had they been left to the enemy, would have served him for charging his cannon.

If to all this it be added that we did not have even one man wounded, I do not think it an exaggeration to regard that rash, mad enterprise as a fruitful and victorious feat of arms. The importance of it should be measured by the evils it remedied. A mine of diamonds is not worth as much to a shipwrecked and famished man as a small concavity that offers him a supply of water. All the trophies that an army might conquer could not be compared with the significance to us of that terrified enemy; that burned town; the felling of that wood which had prevented our vigilance over the river; the poor leaves and wild fruits which we would have scorned at other times and now so eagerly gathered; the spikes and boards; the leveled trenches; the cleared field; and, above all, those doors in the south face of the church opened to the air after

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having been closed for five and a half months, giving entrance to the ventilation that healed and escape for the miasms that destroyed.

Yes, that memorable sally, in which all who could stand performed prodigies of valor, was, for the Detachment of Baler, like a breath of oxygen to one that is being asphyxiated.

With the airing of the church, the new eatables so fresh and green, as the Doctor had craved them, and the hope which our success could not fail to inspire, it was soon apparent that the epidemic was abating.

The vigilant enemy being farther away, it was now possible, when the firing was not too severe, to allow two men to go out daily and bring in sackfuls of pumpkin leaves, plantain shoots, and various herbs; with which was increased and improved the already scanty ration that we could deal out from our provisions. Foreseeing that if the siege should become formal again, it would not be possible to secure this store, I arranged to provide a supply more nearly at hand. Finally, taking advantage of the time given me by the stupefaction of the enemy, I succeeded in clearing the *corral* of all the filth it contained.

This last was extremely important. The refuse, sweepings, and fecal matter had there formed such a mass of foul slime that its stench was unbearable. I therefore ordered a pit to be dug four or five meters outside of the wall, and, by means of a sloping ditch, we drained into it all of the pestilent matter. We thus obtained in a short time, with the help of the rains, an easy conduit for the preservation of cleanliness, and an insulated depository capacious enough and at a sufficient distance to take away all fear of danger from it.

The question of edible vegetables made it necessary for us to utilize as a garden all the available ground, having in view

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the possibility of gathering them even though we should again be hemmed in closely. For this purpose we worked a small piece next to the entrance to our trench, and in it we planted peppers and wild tomatoes, which are abundant in those countries. The trench itself and its ditches were covered with pumpkin vines, which in a short time gave them the appearance of a green field.

All bore promptly; but the pumpkins, much deteriorated, were no bigger than hen's eggs, partly due also to the thickness of the sowing. We had to pull them up when they had reached this stage, because otherwise they would fall of themselves and it would not be possible to eat them.

I believe that I have pointed out that the church was solidly built, except the annex designed as a sacristy. Its walls were thick and strong, of a kind of cement, and with heavy foundations. So thick were they that I had placed along the top, at intervals, rows of boxes filled with earth, behind which there was still left a space half a meter in width. These served as an excellent parapet for our firing and for our watching. Of course, it may be said in passing, the famous ladder of the assault was of good service to us in defending that parapet and relieving its sentries.

But if the walls were not wanting in strength, if they were firm and thick, it was not so with the roof. It was covered with zinc, forming two slopes as in ordinary roof-coverings, but not very well supported in the cornice, as is the case with all coverings when the drainage is in the support itself. When the besiegers saw the risks and difficulties another attempt at assault would present, they preferred to forego it. But, seeking some efficacious means to bring about our surrender, they resolved, apparently, to expose us to the weather, to leave us without a roof; being confident that the continual rain would soon spoil

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the few (or many) rations that we had stored, would cover the floor with water, would deprive us of rest, and would render the continuation of the defense impossible.

To this end, they not only continued to throw showers of stones, which, as I have said, fell upon it like hailstorms, but they fired volleys against our poor roof, which soon rendered it little better than a sieve. Through the numerous holes we could see the firmament as through lattice-work, the aspect of which, on a clear night, recalled that of the starry heavens. But the service of the roof when it rained was more to be feared than desired; because the water, besides passing freely through the many holes, also poured down against the uncovered cornices, where it was retained, rotting them so that they threatened to fall and crush us.

To provide against this danger, a great effort was necessary. To nail the cornices, using the large spikes of which I have spoken, was an undertaking not at all easy, on account of the dangerous conditions under which it had to be done and the insufficiency of the materials employed.

Then the wooden *quizame* (false work), which, under the roof covering and supported against the inner border of the cornices, formed an imitation of a vaulted ceiling, had to be fastened securely to the roof-beams.

We attempted also to stop up, one by one, the numerous holes in the roof zinc. For this we improvised a sort of paste made of flour and plaster, which stopped the holes quickly enough; but the rains were always followed by stifling heat, which withered everything; they became loose and our labor was lost.

Then we tried to stop the holes with pieces of tin, which we so placed as to form channels to carry off the water. This gave us better results, because the remedy was at least more

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lasting; but when the rain was very heavy, there was no place where we could all take refuge, and each one had to look out for himself as God gave him understanding. I sheltered my bed under a covering that appeared to be a wagon-awning, and the others contrived for themselves as best they could.

But nothing availed us on a certain night. A frightful tempest, common to those climes, in which the earth trembles while the elements rage with fury; a veritable deluge, which came down as if threatening the end of the world—completely inundated us. Nine or ten meters of that cornice which had cost us so much labor to secure with spikes fell to the ground. It was truly a miracle that no one was killed. Satisfied with this escape, there was nothing for us to do but to possess ourselves in patience, and on the following day to commence the repairs again.

The enemy meanwhile had returned to the siege. The part of the town we had not burned served as supports to the trenches with which they again surrounded us. But this line was much farther away than the first one, and, for want of the former shelters, was more exposed. In order to protect themselves, the enemy had to construct head-coverings, and in the bottom of the trenches a sort of platform, because they were flooded, at times in consequence of the rains, and at others by the tides, which ebbed and flowed daily in the various branches of the river.

All this increased the discomforts of the besieger, and with them his eagerness for our surrender, which was noticeable in the ceaseless hostilities by which he tried to annoy us. What a quantity of ammunition he expended uselessly in spite of Villacorta's announcement!

On our part, we sought to avoid carelessness, to constantly lie in wait for the enemy, and not to fire except when we considered it necessary.

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Christmas Eve came, that festival of intimacy which evokes so many memories at all Christian firesides; and we prepared to celebrate it noisily.

I ordered that the troops be served an extra allowance of pumpkin, some preserve made of the orange skins, and coffee. We had found in the church a number of musical instruments belonging to the town band, and I ordered them distributed to all the men off duty; to one a flute, to another the bass drum, to others the snare drum, clarinets, etc., and to the rest, because we did not have enough to go around, petroleum tins.

It is not necessary to try to describe the noise we made that night.

They also made themselves hoarse in the enemy's trenches by shouting at us all kinds of vituperation, saying that it would soon be over and then would come the tears, that there we had to die; while we, redoubling the noisy discord, tried to drive away the sadness in our souls by thinking that we were still able to infuriate the enemy, that we still had cartridges left for our defense, and that there still waved over the tower, in spite of tempests and rains, the banner of our unfortunate Country.

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III.

FROM DECEMBER 25, 1898, TO FEBRUARY, 1899.

AN EPISODE.—A PARLEY.—LETTERS.—VAIN HOPES.—THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW. — PALAY. — CAPTAIN OLMEDO.—AN INTERVIEW.—INFORMALITIES.—REASON FOR OUR DOUBT.

During one of the last days of December there occurred a small incident, a simple episode, which, of no importance in itself, induced me, so to speak, to renew the flag of truce. I have not been able to explain to myself the logic of it; but the fact is that the one was derived immediately from the other, and it may well be that the renewal was a yielding to the curiosity excited by the trifling episode.

Along in the middle of the afternoon we saw running through the enemy's trenches, jumping and screaming, a boy, apparently about twelve years old. "Do you wish me to kill him, my Lieutenant?" said the sentinel to me. "No," I replied; "call to him to see if he wishes anything of us." The soldier did so, but the boy paid no attention to him; and, without ceasing his cries or stopping as he leaped along, he disappeared through the woods.

On the following day one of the party stationed in the town sounded the call for a parley. We had learned only by hearing to know the enemy's trumpeters apart. This was one of those that sounded the poorest calls, and he had been lodged opposite the church. On hearing him, I said to myself: "Can the others have marched away? Are there left only the people of Baler, and do they wish to say to us something worth while?" I ordered the "attention" to be sounded and the white flag raised.

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A man presented himself, and delivered to us a package containing three letters. One was from Villacorta, telling us that Captain Bellota had arrived at the camp; that he had come to confer with us, and that for this purpose hostilities were suspended until the termination of the conference, which would take place at such hour and in such manner as we might determine. Another letter was from the said Captain, informing us that he had been sent to Baler for the conference. The third was from the curate, Friar Mariano Gil Atienza, begging us for God's sake to hear and give credit to what Bellota would tell us.

I answered the bearer that he might tell the Captain that I was waiting for him right there in the *plaza.* I was imprudent enough to wait in the *plaza,* and it might have cost me my life. But no one presented himself; and as it began to grow dark I ordered the white flag to be lowered, and that any *Insurrecto* that might be seen should be fired at, because everything indicated that all this had been nothing more than a ruse. They had feigned the mediation of a person who might find no difficulty in presenting himself to us simply to see if we would consent to receive him.

Considering our situation, it is easy to imagine that this event would set me to thinking. Assuming it as a fact that the Spanish domination had ceased in the Archipelago, as we had been assured, why not wait for the official notification of such an occurrence? If the war were going badly and we must withdraw from Baler, how was it that notice in due form was wanting? If there were so many capitulations, why not show us some of the surrendered commanders?

The news of the presence of Bellota led me to hope that our doubts would come to an end. For this reason I went out myself, risking everything, to the promised conference. I was,

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no doubt, carried away by perfectly natural impatience; and on finding myself deceived, my mistrust was necessarily increased. The danger risked on that occasion, the seriousness of which I quickly appreciated, made me more cautious and suspicious. Bear in mind—think, I repeat, of the series of traps with which they had tried to ensnare me, and my bearing thereafter will be appreciated.

And now came the night of December 31st, the last of the year, the first of 1899, the one hundred and eighty-fourth of the siege. The last page of the American calendar disclosed to my eyes the now useless piece of pasteboard to which it had been glued, and on tearing it off I had a feeling, painful, indefinable, which might well be called romantic, but — what more romantic, after all, than that same tenacity in defending ourselves? Regard it as you will; but I, who, starving for sleep and without hope of succor, had gone on tearing off those leaves, seeing them disappear like dead comrades—I, who with the dwindling of that calendar saw also the disappearance of our carefully doled out ammunition and rations—I could not regard with indifference the disappearance from its place of that which left exposed traces of the past with all its bitterness and sadness.

The new year appeared to come sinister and dark, with despair at its end; and I felt an irresistible faintness, an oppression that was suffocating me, the want of some one in whom I could confide my anxieties and the heaviness of the duty which was crushing me; and I had to shut myself up in silence.

I must say it. One of the things that most weighed upon my spirits during those interminable days and in those nights of wakeful apprehension was the secrecy with which I had to guard my purposes, the want of consultation and advice. To

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no one could I confide my perplexities; since, in order not to discourage my men, I had to appear confident and resolute and to share with no one my belief in our most serious situation. Vigil was the only one who, by reason of his education and class, could be of use to me as a companion and confidant. But Vigil, whose uprightness of soul and great patriotism I cannot find words to praise as they should be, was wanting in military knowledge. His appointment in the Army was temporary. And, if he was our good angel in many things, our constant help, he could not be my adviser in those most difficult circumstances. I was compelled, therefore, to judge for myself alone, on all occasions; a thing in truth more crushing than it would seem.

In order not to lose track of the days, we substituted a written calendar for the one that had run out, of similar form and with leaves in which we wrote the month, the date, the day of the week. Before each monthly bunch had run out, we prepared another for the next month.

But the rice was all gone by this time, and we had to devote ourselves to hulling the seventy *cavanes* of *palay* (unhulled rice) that the deceased Padre Carreño had bought. The task is wearisome and always difficult to those unaccustomed to it; exasperatingly slow and at that time with results little gratifying; since, in consequence of the very bad manner in which we were obliged to store it, and our inability to properly expose it to the sun, it cost a great deal of labor to separate the hull grain by grain. In doing so all delicacy and care was used, all the care demanded by, I shall not say necessity, but hunger; and even then not a grain came out whole, which caused a great deal of loss.

As the condition of the troops did not warrant calling upon them for unnecessary labor, I had to reduce the time de-

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voted to this work to so many hours daily, to get out only what was indispensable for the ration, and this of rice that was dirty, powdery, unfit. I leave it to any one to imagine how tempting it was, seasoned, in such a condition, with tinned sardines half unserviceable, intolerable bacon, or pumpkin leaves, and without salt. To give it something of a flavor, we mixed it with some small wild peppers, very sharp (red peppers might be considered sweet as compared with them), which are very abundant in that country.

Nevertheless this was the best the garrison of Baler had daily from the beginning of the year 1899, when it had already sustained one hundred and eighty-four days of siege, when forty had passed since we lost our commandant, when the ration of flour, which ought to have been 500 grams, had to be reduced to 200, and when I found myself under the necessity of cutting off the small advance of five cents every three days, which, in order to compensate for the deficiency of rations, had been given to each man since the beginning of the siege.

On the 13th of January Private Marcos José Petana was wounded. During one of these nights the enemy, under cover of darkness, left near the door of the church a package containing seven or eight Filipino newspapers, which we were surprised to find the following day. I ought not to have read them. Their items gave no information of anything. They might be called a froth of insults, or filthy, disgusting vituperation against Spain and her sons; against that generous Nation which had brought to such distant lands, and at the cost of Spanish blood, the light of the Gospel; and against her sons, from whom those swarms of wretched aborigines had received their first notions of humanity and culture.

I remember that one of those caterpillar secretions, not calling them news, related that in Manila a *Castila* disguised

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as an *Indio* (native) had robbed a lady (a native woman, perhaps, disguised as a *Castila*) of her *portemonnaie,* and that the Americans had seized him to put him in prison.

Another shameless item published an instance of the parish priest of Albulug (Cagayán), Friar José Brugués, begging a Filipino general to allow him to remain in the *pueblo* named, in order to look after the coffee plantations that the priest owned there. The article affirmed that this action showed that the priest was favorably disposed to the insurrection, as he had demonstrated, it added, by often furnishing all kinds of aid to the Tagálogs.

The effect produced upon me by this unfortunate reading could not be worse. I tore the paper in pieces, vowing not to touch another one even though they should put it on the tower itself.

The month of February came without anything to note other than the already described firings and the increasing poverty of our supplies. The epidemic carried away another victim on the 13th, causing the death of Private José Sáus Meramendi.

On the 14th, becoming annoyed by hearing the enemy's trumpets sounding a parley, I went up into the tower to observe what was going on about us. Near one of the fortified houses, marked on the map, I discovered the trumpeter, and with him another man ready to raise the white flag. Noting our silence, this individual went, after a few moments, toward the so-called "Bridge of Spain." It was there that we believed the enemy's headquarters was located, because they had fortified it, closing both ends and strengthening it against any attack, with truly noteworthy skill.

I continued my observation. The man with the flag had no sooner disappeared than he appeared again and returned

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to his former place. "They must have beaten you," I thought on seeing this, "or you would not have come back in such a hurry;" and from the brevity of his stay I might well have thought this. Twice again the trumpet sounded the "attention," without any reply from us. I remained on watch to see how all this would end, puzzled, not by the strangeness of the proceeding itself, which offered nothing in particular, but by its insistency, and especially by the rapid coming and going of the man who was carrying the flag.

It generally happened, as I have already had occasion to note, that if, instead of replying to a call for a parley, we remained silent, they would become timid and withdraw for fear of our firing upon them. Judge of my surprise, then, when I saw the individual, or, rather, the flag he carried, dart into Cardinal Cisneros Street and move in our direction. I cried out to him to halt and to go back to the trenches at once.

"Are you Captain Las Morenas?" he said on seeing me.

"No," I replied; "I am one of the officers of the Detachment. Why do you come here?"

"I am Captain Don Miguel Olmedo, and I come on the part of the Captain-General to speak with Señor Las Morenas."

"Captain Las Morenas does not speak to anyone, nor does he wish to receive anyone. He has already been deceived many times, and he is determined that they shall not deceive him again. Tell me what you wish to say and I shall tell it to him."

He replied that the General knew very well that attempts had been made to deceive us; but that now there was no danger, because everything he now had to say was true; and that he was bringing an official paper from our chief authority in the Archipelago.

We were holding this dialogue, I from the trench and he about forty paces away. On hearing that he brought an official

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communication, I ordered out a soldier to bring it to me; but the bearer refused to deliver it for some time, saying that he had positive orders to deliver it in person. But when I hinted, in order to put an end to the argument, that if he did not wish to deliver it, he must withdraw with it at once, he gave way to my ultimatum and sent the message to me by the soldier.

Then I said to him: "You may wait. I am going to see what the Captain determines." And I went in as if I were going for the purpose named, and read the following:

"The treaty of peace between Spain and the United States having been signed, and the sovereignty of these Islands having been ceded to the latter nation, you will evacuate the place, bringing away with you armament, munitions, and the treasure-chests, being guided by the verbal instructions that, by my order, will be communicated to you by Don Miguel Olmedo y Calve. God keep you many years.

"Diego de los Ríos.

"Manila, February 1st, 1899."

And at the bottom:

"Señor Commandante politico-militar of the District of El Príncipe, Don Enrique de las Morenas, Captain of Infantry."

Wondering at such a personal command, I again read over the paper with all the mistrust that may be imagined. I observed that it did not appear to have been recorded anywhere. "Come," I thought, "it has not occurred to them to number the communication, and yet, besides naming at the foot the official title of the person to whom it is directed, they have not forgotten to write, with care, the name and surname, a redundancy entirely unnecessary. And they bother themselves about the treasure-chests, something we know nothing about here, not even remotely." I turned to the soldiers and said: "It is nothing; the same old song." I then went out to the trench and

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said to the so-called Captain Olmedo: "Captain Las Morenas has said, 'Very well. You may withdraw.'"

Instead of withdrawing, he answered that he would like to remain in the church, because he was wet through. I refused this, and he asked me where he was going to sleep that night. "Where you slept the other nights," I replied.

He then began to complain, arguing that it could not be true that Las Morenas would behave in that way toward him, since they were fellow-countrymen, had gone to school together, and claiming I do not know how many bonds of intimacy between them. "Well," he exclaimed finally, "when must I return for the answer?" "When we sound the 'attention' and raise the white flag," I said; "and if we fail to do so, you need not trouble yourself, because there will then be no answer." He then went away, and I did not see him again.

For several nights after this we could hear him talking in the *bahay,* or house, of the under Governor, which house was also fortified; from which we inferred that he must have been some *Insurrecto* chief.

Who could suppose anything else? Who could imagine that any captain of the Army would have presented himself, with a message of so much importance, dressed as a countryman, making use of the enemy's trumpets, asking for a parley in the identical way in which it had been asked for so many times before, and without displaying any Spanish insignia, any outward sign which would indicate that he was one of our own?

I also considered that if he had been a schoolmate of our dead Captain, he would not have failed to notice at once that I was not the Captain, and therefore would not have asked me if I were Las Morenas. Neither was it a detail to pass unnoticed that he claimed to be wet through and that he had no place to stay, while his clothing did not appear to be wet at

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Bahay (house) occupied by the Tagálog officers and the last piece of ordnance with which they cannonaded the Spanish detachment of Baler (Philippines), commanded by Don Saturnino Martin Cerezo.
(1) Corporal Alfonso Sus Fojos and (2) Hospital Attendant Tomás Paladio Paredes, deserters.

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all, and when it was a natural thing that, enemy or no enemy, he could count on the assistance and tolerance of our besiegers. Moreover, there was the very recent occurrence of Belloto, who announced himself as a captain of the Army, and who afterwards did not find it convenient to show himself.

It might very well be that an ingenious ruse was intended; that on the former occasion their resolution to carry it out had failed at the critical moment; and that, having knowledge later, through some treachery, of the death of the Military Governor, they had planned this deception, forging the communication without considering the matter of the treasure-chests, nor the want of a record number, nor the superfluity in the personal direction. And, confiding in the favorable reception of the document, they thought to bring about our surrender.

It is very certain that the delights of Baler could not have been the cause of my doubts and delays. Nobody more than ourselves desired to put an end to it all, to change those scenes, to finish it at once, if the circumstances had warranted it. But then, I had to bear in mind Article 748 of the Field Regulations, which says: "Remembering that in war all kinds of deceptions and ruses are resorted to, even when a written order from superior authority is received to surrender the place, its execution will be suspended until its complete authenticity is made certain, sending, if possible, a person of confidence to verify it verbally." It was unequivocal and I was not in position to ascertain the authenticity of that order; I could not quit that post of honor without satisfying myself that I was not the victim of a ruse; that afterwards my credulity could not be imputed to my desire; that I was, in fact, obeying orders. All these were considerations which, apparently, in the general subversion of things, were not borne in mind by those by whom they should have been taken into account.

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IV.

FROM FEBRUARY 25TH TO APRIL 8TH.

CONSPIRACY DISCOVERED. — UNEXPECTED GAME. — IMITATING ROBINSON CRUSOE.—AMBUSCADE. — REPRISALS. — MODERN CANNON.—ATTACKS REPELLED.—THE BACON GIVES OUT.

During the time I had been in command of the individuals that composed the Detachment there had been abundant opportunity to know each one thoroughly. If there be a time when our souls are laid bare, so to speak, when are made evident the vices and virtues, the strength or weakness that we all bear in the most hidden recesses of our nature, it is when danger afflicts and oppresses us, when suffering discourages us, and when the mysterious change of death is presented close at hand, with the cutting off of hope and life.

Then are shown in a powerful light the faith and enthusiasm that deify us, or the selfishness that brutalizes us; and a man makes himself a martyr, attains the heights of heroism, or descends into the wretchedness of crime, falls completely into the cowardice that makes him infamous.

Among the defenders of that far-away church of Baler this phenomenon had perforce to prove true; and I, who entertained no illusions, who was fully aware of the strong temptations that might seduce my men, whether by the inducements and threats uttered with loud cries, day after day, from the enemy's trenches, or whether by the sufferings we were undergoing, left unnoticed no indications, no detail, which would enable me to know the true character of each man. I knew, then, that in that place were hearts of extraordinary excellence, men of fiber, and hearts pusillanimous; souls capable of every

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kind of initiative; and irresolute souls, of the kind that allow themselves to be led passively in any direction; honorable dispositions and dishonorable dispositions.

I did not attempt to hide from myself the danger. I knew, therefore, that if without there were ambuscade, within there could be treason; that the smallest weakness or vacillation on my part might precipitate our ruin; and that there was nothing for me but the exercise of continual vigilance and extreme rigor, the former the more difficult and the latter the more severe because I was the only person there with authority to act.

I was, therefore, not very much surprised at the information that was laid before me on the 25th of February, nor did I hesitate a moment in coming to a decision. The matter which at first seemed to be only an attempt at desertion, turned out later to be something much more serious.

I had determined upon my line of conduct. It was based on the common safety of all, regulated by the demands of duty, and I had to follow it. There was no room for any other course than to be pitilessly inexorable.

Private Loreto Gallego Gárcia informed me that his companion, Antonio Menache Sánchez, intended to desert to the enemy. This belief was founded on the declaration of Menache himself. Gallego had been keeping a small sum of money belonging to Menache, a not uncommon thing among comrades, and about two months before this the latter had asked for it, confessing that he had the intention of joining the Tagálogs, "because he had taken it into his head to do it."

His companion had taken it as a joke or had mildly censured it. He had not again referred to it, and it appeared to have been forgotten; when, on the night of February 24th, at about ten o'clock, Menache was seen to climb secretly, well wrapped in his blanket, up the little stairway from the closet;

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to closely observe the enemy's camp; and then to crawl on all fours to the right, where, at a short distance, was a window which, although loopholed as they all were, offered an easy exit.

All this being observed by the nearest sentry, he had twice called upon Menache to halt; but the latter, without replying and still on all fours, had gone back hastily by the same way. It was seen, when he came down the little stairs, that he was carrying his rifle in his right hand. Menache was a vagabond who had been taken up and then, like many others, sent to the Army in the Philippines. He had, therefore a suspicious past, which, added to his indiscretion of two months before, and the occurrence just stated, justified Gallego's suspicion.

I called Menache and asked him what he had intended to do. He began by denying most positively, resorting to all sorts of oaths, weeping and grieving bitterly. But I, who for my own part had been observing certain strange whisperings and certain negligences, pressed him closely and in such a way, being certain of his guilt on account of his contradictions and blunderings, that he finished by telling me everything.

It was something more serious than I had supposed, but something also that might have been conceived. It was a matter of veritable conspiracy; and if it had not gone further, it was not for want of will in the culprits, but of opportunity; and I must say to the honor of their brave companions, for want of "atmosphere."

The said Menache had, a long time before, conspired with another soldier, José Alcáide Bayona, whose name, of execrable memory, I shall have occasion to repeat later on; and the two having agreed with one of the corporals, Vicente Gonzáles Toca, the escape had been prepared.

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It was undeniable that if they had not realized their purpose, it must have been because they wished to extend the conspiracy and to accomplish it on some occasion when they might gain the good-will of the enemy. Everything appeared to indicate this, because otherwise it was not understood why these men remained and suffered the privations of the siege. Separately they could have escaped at almost any time; but now the attempt of Menache, leaving his companions in the church, gave reason to suspect many things. What had they been plotting? Were the others to have followed him one after another? Were they to remain planning some abominable treachery that he was to communicate to the enemy? Well might this be so.

I proceeded to institute proper inquiries, because in more than one way the offense was serious, and I had to take precautions. I found out that they had decided only to go over to the Tagálogs, each taking his rifle, two knapsacks, and the cartridge-box from his equipments, filled with ammunition; that they had no accomplices; and that it had all been spoiled by the irresolution of Menache. The last was evident; the want of accomplices probable; the rest is not very clear.

I persisted in my inquiries, but could find them guilty only of other acts which were serious enough, but yet foreign to their military obligations. There was no other course but to make sure of them by placing them at once in close confinement. In the situation in which I found myself I could legally have ordered them shot summarily, since, after all, the circumstances seemed to demand it, in order to prevent greater evils; but I did not wish to do so. I ordered them shut up in the baptistery; and although I placed irons on them, it was because of the little security afforded by the door, or grating, of that room, and of the alarming perversity exhibited by these men.

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Consider the impression that this occurrence made on me. I was becoming suspicious of my own shadow. From the beginning of the siege I had not enjoyed the luxury of a quiet sleep, and since everything had come into my hands I had scarcely any opportunity for sleep. I slept when I was walking, when I was watching, and when I was eating; on foot and when I was seated; when I was speaking and when I was silent; my state was a perpetual vigilance, my head a vexation, my body that of an automaton.

In this condition the incident of the conspiracy had supervened, proving the insufficiency of my efforts, and in the face of that I could not but feel desperate. My nerves reached such a state that a light murmur, the slightest noise, kept me awake in racking agitation. I seemed to find alarming appearances in everything; and in everything cause for suspicion and dread. It is difficult to imagine the despair and suffering produced by a failure of physiological powers when an ardent will demands their exercise. I sought in vain for light for my brain, which was becoming stupefied, vigor for my arms, resistance against the overpowering heaviness of lassitude. God will put it to my account. Recalling it now, I doubt if it were not all a frightful nightmare.

It is happily so that after the blackest night may come a most joyous morning. In the miserably poor condition to which our ration supply had now been reduced, nothing so grateful could have been offered to us as fresh meat, and at the same time there was nothing apparently more impossible to have. How often had we regretted those three or four horses which I had kept as a matter of foresight at the time we shut ourselves up; and which, on account of the aversion of the rest, I had been obliged to turn loose! How much we would have given for those pieces of venison that we had not

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cared for at first! But no one thought of really having meat, because it was considered an impossibility, as unlikely as it would have been to see the manna and quail such as the Israelites gathered in the Exodus. But Heaven itself caused the realization of the miracle, and we had a good supply of meat, thanks to an unexpected hunting-party.

On a certain night towards the end of February our sentinels gave notice that some carabao were approaching the church. The latter being surrounded by the enemy's trenches, which, judging from the constant firing, could not have been abandoned, the presence of the carabao was rather strange. Ordinarily it was necessary to go to the forest to find this species of animal, wild, timid, afraid of man; and now they had come even into the enemy's bivouacs without being frightened by his presence or by the fires; had cleared the trenches, and were circulating freely on our side.

The thing was, however, easily explained. The Tagálogs, notwithstanding their frugality, were unwilling to deprive themselves of meat; and, in order to have it at hand when they wished it, they had gotten together a small herd of those nutritive ruminants, and had turned them loose to graze between their possessions and ours. Perhaps they thought that even though we might kill one of them, it would be the Tagálogs who would profit by the chase.

On the night in question, owing to the singularity of the visit, which took us by surprise, we succeeded only in driving the carabao away. One of the sentinels fired hastily, but did not make a hit. But on the following night I went to the trench with five of the best marksmen, first warning them not to fire except as I ordered; and all to aim behind the shoulder-blade of the same animal.

After a short time, Fortune favored us. We killed one

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of those big animals, and before daylight we had already skinned and quartered it.

We had a protracted feast. It was useless to attempt to restrain the soldiers. So great was their hunger that they became almost insane, and it was necessary to allow them to do as they pleased in cutting off pieces of the meat, which they roasted and devoured. For this reason the meat lasted only three days; and it is hardly necessary to say that the men ate so much the first day that their stomachs suffered. When this supply was all gone, we repeated the chase, killing another carabao; but this time we were compelled to get it in under the enemy's fire.

As there was no salt, nothing could be preserved, and after two days the meat became totally unfit to eat. We had to lie in wait again, and a third carabao served to replenish the provisions, although very transitorily. On this occasion we hit two of the animals; but when, on the following day, we tried to get the second one in, it was already swollen and beginning to decompose.

With this the unexpected hunting came to an end; because the besiegers, seeing that they made nothing of it and that they could not keep us from it, drove the cattle away. We had already felt the need of salt; but now we found it even more grievous not to have it, on account of the service it might have been to us by making it possible to preserve the meat.

But the benefit we derived from the visit of the carabao was not all confined to the nine or ten days that we had a supply of meat. The hides also of the three animals, after being well dried and stretched, were very useful to us in our barefoot condition, in making leather pads for the soles of the feet. In order that there should be no waste or pilfering, I

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kept the skins myself, from which I cut the pieces as needed by each man. Something of the same thing was done by that sovereign of Aragon who thus protected the feet of his warriors from the stony paths of the Pyrenees.

March was beginning, and the troops were almost without clothing. At first they had persevered in mending their trousers, finally converting them into mere breech-clouts, and in using the sleeves of their blouses to patch those same blouses, or, rather, the sleeveless garments to which they had been reduced. But when there was no longer anything from which they could make patches and the tattered garments again presented new rents; when the thread had given out and one after another the needles had disappeared—each man was going about clothed as best he could devise.

To remedy this state of nudity, I issued, March 1st, some sheets, drawers, and shirts from the hospital supplies. This gave them something wherewith to clothe themselves; and then, imitating Robinson Crusoe on his desert isle, they drew out the threads from a piece of the cloth, and, with needles improvised from a piece of wire, it was not long before they had made for themselves the garments most demanded by modesty.

In the frontispiece of this book, a reproduction of the picture taken when we arrived at the capital of the Archipelago, will be seen some who still wore those garments. The others had thrown them aside on the road as fast as they could substitute others, because they were ashamed of their appearance.

On the 25th, the festival of the Incarnation, the last *palay* was hulled. Everything was giving out, and on the following day, in order to distract the soldiers, I ordered a trench opened cutting the Street of Spain, at the end of which was

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the bridge of the same name. I have already said that the latter was covered and completely fortified.

Near the bridge, to the right of the street, rose the house of the *Gobernadorcillo,* and to the left, next to the street called Cardinal Cisneros, was another house, also fortified (the photograph of which is shown), in which were cannon. The result was, therefore, that from the trench we could fire upon the entrance to the bridge and prevent communication with the two houses.

The work was completed without attracting the enemy's attention, and was arranged so that we could occupy it or retire from it without my men being seen. On the 28th I concealed a few men there, who soon surprised the enemy with their fire, causing him to abandon three men in the street, two killed and one badly wounded. In this way, besides occupying and animating my men, I proposed to show that we were neither discouraged nor asleep, exasperating the enemy at the same time so that they would become impatient and attack us openly.

And attack us they did, but at a distance and protected by their shelters; the attack being a sustained fire, which commenced at five o'clock on the morning of the 30th and lasted until dark, with nothing noteworthy except the appearance of a modern gun, one of those that we had at Cavite. Its projectiles shook the church, but produced no considerable damage.

Afterwards I learned that Aguinaldo, hearing of our prolonged resistance, had sent Tiño, one of his generals, with particular instructions and numerous forces, among whom, it appears, we caused some fifty casualties the day they arrived; that Tiño had had to withdraw in a short time, informing the leader of the insurrection that the church of Baler could not

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be taken by assault; and that Aguinaldo had replied, "You will see that it can be taken," and had sent this modern gun for that purpose, with a full supply of shell and canister which—caused nothing to be seen except our firm tenacity in the defense.

Imagining, perhaps, that the presence of the gun and its discharges might have broken our spirit, they demanded, during the late hours of that same night, a parley, with repeated trumpet-calls; and, seeing that we remained silent, they again commenced firing, about four o'clock, along the whole line. The consumption of ammunition by rifles as well as cannon must have been very great that fine morning; and I say "fine" because not only did it have no bloody result, as far as we were concerned, but it served actually to increase our enthusiasm and ardor.

When day broke, they insisted on demanding a parley, thrusting out of their trenches a very long bamboo, to the end of which were fastened a letter and a package of newspapers. We replied by deliberately firing at the point where it seemed to us we might find a target, and they then renewed the attack. This diminished somewhat at midday, but in the early hours of the afternoon, the enemy being now furious because we had not received their message, it again took on formidable proportions.

A great crowd of people must have filled the enemy's trenches, and they broke, with the beginning of the firing, into frightful yelling. The voices of a multitude of women were joined to those of our ordinary adversaries, as if the whole population of the Island, without distinction of sex or age, had come together, anxious to finish us by a definitive assault. It did not come to this; on the contrary, we obliged them, by our fire, to cease using their cannon.

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During the first eight days of April the firing ceased only for short intervals, but they used the new gun with evident reluctance, from which we inferred that we must have succeeded in inflicting punishment on their cannoneers. Needless to say how much we would have rejoiced to know it.

And now came the 8th, of sad memory, because on that day we finished, I shall not say the remains, but the last filthiness of the bacon.

I have already said that the *palay* had given out; the beans were now about finished, and the coffee was going. There was nothing for it but a resort to a repugnant extremity, of which I shall speak presently, to allay the fierce hunger that tormented us; to have recourse to it or to surrender to the Tagálogs.

The situation could not have been more difficult. We had sustained the siege for a matter of two hundred and eighty-two days, and it was now one hundred and thirty-seven since the command devolved on me by the death of Las Morenas. Our military honor was safe, perfectly safe; our necessities, however, were great; but by surrendering we should have to humble the flag, to trust our lives to the furious rabble that surrounded us, to expose ourselves to the derision of our infamous deserters— I had not the courage to do it, and I determined that the defense should be continued.

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V.

APRIL.

HOPES OF SUCCOR.—A VESSEL IN THE ROADSTEAD.—FIGHTING AND DECEPTION. — CONTINUOUS PARLEYS. — WE WAIT. — ATTEMPTED BURNING. — EXPLOIT OF VIGIL. — WITHOUT COFFEE.

A phenomenon of the imagination, born of the similarity of circumstances, caused me daily to reflect upon what an immense joy must be the appearance of a hospitable island to the crew of a helpless ship, when destitute of food and without resources for the repair of their vessel. Our church might be regarded as lost in the solitude of the ocean, ours as a forgotten expedition. Without subsistence, with no means of breaking that line of angry enemies who day after day were fighting us without ceasing, well could we compare ourselves with the dismasted and lonely ship, the plaything of the waves, surrounded by the cruel seas, which is slowly sinking, mocking in its destruction the faith and devotion of its brave mariners.

To complete the illusion, there was not even wanting the wash of the waves, which becomes so irritating in very long voyages. The proximity of the shore brought it to us plainly. Especially in the silence of the night did that peculiar roaring of the angry surf reach us, that awful moaning ending with a menace, which seems to rise from the depths to reach into the infinity of space.

During the night watches, when in solitude I meditated, looking our helpless state in the face; when, thinking of the sufferings we had undergone, of the long period during which

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the defense had been sustained, I considered that meantime so much could have been done for us from Manila, from the headquarters of the Army, from Spain itself; when to all my calculations there responded, in fine, no other conclusion than that of manifest abandonment and sure destruction, I confess that the voice of the sea, lugubrious and oppressive, afflicted me in an indefinable manner. It appeared to answer my thoughts by the announcement of mysterious calamities.

In such manner did all this possess me that, I confess it, that voice, sad at times, angry at others, became to me one of the most terrible things of the night.

On April 17th, between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, we thought we heard ten cannon-shots in the direction of San José de Casignan. They sounded far away, and appeared to be from guns of large caliber.

My men went almost mad with joy, believing that it could mean nothing but the arrival of a strong column of relief. And this joy rose to the highest pitch, almost to frenzy, when at night we saw the searchlight directed from the bay upon the church, as though searching us out to protect and support us.

Out there was the salvation for a sight of which we had so longingly turned our eyes to the ocean solitudes; and the joy we felt can be compared only to that which must be felt by unhappy wretches who, as they are about to sink, suddenly behold the mist torn asunder and, close to the bow of their ship, the smooth beach covered with trees and smiling with promises.

We could not doubt. There must be a land force, and a vessel of war with another force to disembark and rescue us. As soon as it is day they will begin the movement, and before ten we shall have them with us, we victorious, the siege raised, and this almost unsupportable resistance at an end.

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I think it can be asserted that during the night there was not an individual in that church who was not a volunteer sentry, peering through the darkness, listening for and commenting upon the slightest sounds that reached us from the enemy, and waiting for dawn with all the impatience that may be imagined.

At first it was as we had hoped. In the early hours we heard firing close at hand in the direction of the sea, which indicated the disembarkation. Nothing was heard from the direction of San José, which troubled me somewhat; but this might be owing to the want of a well-considered plan of co-operation, and, as it was not long before the firing ceased, we figured that it was only a matter of reconnaissance made by the marines.

When the afternoon came, it seemed as though the thing were now going on in earnest, as the ship's guns, which must have been of great power, began firing, and we could see the Tagálogs in confused flight, loaded with their equipments and *petates* (sleeping-mats). The crash of the guns was so great that our church trembled to its foundations. We were trembling also; not from fear, but from eagerness and pleasure.

Up to six we counted the shots, one after another, at regular intervals; and then, noticing that the series was discontinued, and supposing that it was all over, since the Indians continued their flight, I directed all my men to take their rifles to the loopholes, and then I ordered three consecutive volleys, in order to show the rescuing party that we were still alive and were still defending ourselves.

Night closed in without anything to indicate that they had heard us. In case this might be so, and in case they had not, by chance, seen the flag, which was always kept raised and flying, I ordered two soldiers to go up into the tower, providing

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themselves with a very long bamboo, to the end of which was fastened a rag well soaked in kerosene, and directed them to wave it lighted when the ship again turned her searchlight on us.

This was done, but we had only silence for an answer. At four o'clock in the morning the searchlight was extinguished; soon afterwards the lights of the vessel passed by the *Confites,* doubled Point Enchantment, and disappeared on the route to Manila.

It is impossible to exaggerate the effect that such a withdrawal could not fail to produce on our minds. Even if I should try to do so, I could not find adequate words. Let anyone imagine the despair we must have felt, the dejection that weighed upon us like lead, and he will understand the little less than insuperable difficulty under which I now labored in my efforts to reanimate my soldiers.

That vessel was the American *Yorktown.* Its mission was to rescue us; but instead of doing so, it was going away, leaving as victims of the enemy's fury fourteen enlisted men and one officer, who, under the protection of its powerful guns, and provided with a Gatling gun, had succeeded in disembarking to their ruin.

Not one was left to tell the tale,* as we afterwards learned.

*This is a mistake. The party, seventeen in number, including two guides, were attacked while still in the boat, a short time after they entered the river. At the first volley one man was killed, and one mortally and one seriously wounded. The second volley wounded two mortally and three seriously. One lad was hit four times.

The oars being badly shattered and the survivors being impeded in their movements by the dead and wounded, the boat drifted ashore up the river, where another man was wounded. The rest, being overwhelmed by numbers, surrendered.

The unhurt, eight in number, were first taken to San Isidro. From there they were taken to the west coast, where they, with other Americans and Spaniards, were confined in various towns for eight months. They were finally abandoned in the mountains of

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Their arms and the gun became the spoils of the Tagálogs, who, well intrenched along the river and favored by the ground, had undoubtedly taken them by surprise and promptly defeated them. The cannon-shots of the afternoon had been directed against an old fortification situated at the mouth of the river, where the besiegers had sheltered themselves strongly.

Let me now once more record the very bad conditions under which it had been thought proper to keep the Detachment at Baler. The ease with which it could be cut off was already evident, notorious, when we were sent there. That, considering its strength, it could do nothing towards the tranquillity of the territory, was also evident. To what end, therefore, was it kept there condemned to a useless sacrifice?

I confess my dullness, but I am yet unable to explain it to myself satisfactorily. I do not attempt to blame anyone, and I make this observation with all due respect. But, after all, considering the great sufferings we underwent there, I believe I have a certain right to make it.

Pardon the digression and let us proceed. In a very short time, by calling upon all the resources of my scanty eloquence, I was enabled to tranquilize the others and even myself, arguing that it was only a matter of putting off our rescue for a few days. The ship had not brought enough force to make the disembarkation a success, and it was sure to be sent back.

All this seemed very natural. We were then ignorant of

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northern Luzon, their guard running away at the approach of an American force.

The united party made its way to a point about ten miles from Aparri, on the northeast coast, where it was picked up by a Navy vessel and taken to Manila.

The story of their wanderings and rescue is told in a most interesting manner by Lieutenant Commander Gilmore, in *McClure's Magazine* for August and September, 1900.

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what had happened to fifteen of its crew, and we thought we were reasoning logically in supposing that it was not really a desistance from the mission of rescue that had undoubtedly brought it there. We were ignorant of its nationality (we supposed it to be Spanish). Even if we had known, and had been aware of its misfortune in carrying out its enterprise, its return would have appeared to us certain, if for nothing more than the honor of revenge.

That same evening, April 13th, they hoisted in the enemy's trenches the North American banner (taken, evidently, from the *Yorktown's* men, but then something inexplicable to us), and sent to us a certain person, in sailor's uniform, who, on approaching, asked if there was anyone among us who could speak French.

As soon as the soldiers saw him, they began to declare that it was Captain Olmedo. He appeared to me to be the same; and he, observing that he had been taken for Olmedo (probably he had known him), pretended to inform us, speaking gibberish, that the captain of the American ship, anchored in the roads, placed the vessel at our disposal to take us to Spain, in view of the fact that peace between the two countries had been signed. I answered him that it was very well, and that he could withdraw; which did not have to be repeated, he showing by his speed that he understood our language perfectly.

From that day it was truly a rosary of flags of truce from those trenches. We refused to receive them, threatening them with our fire; while they, placing themselves under cover, cried out that we ought to receive the letter they were presenting, and that it was our liberty, "our liberty which the town of Baler was offering us."

One afternoon, finally, they sent out to us a small boy,

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who might have been six years old. Once, twice, three times he came out with that letter in one hand and a white flag in the other. We made him go back, and as he again tried to approach one of the best shots in the Detachment said to me, "Do you wish me to shoot the letter out of his hand?" "Yes," I said; "but take care not to wound him." "Don't be alarmed," he replied. He fired, and the letter flew through the air as though impelled by magic art. The youngster disappeared screaming, and the incident put an end, serving as a cross, to the rosary.

It may be imagined that we now took account of time, and how we went on counting the hours since the incident of the *Yorktown;* the waiting and watching; the insupportable excitement that dominated us. When the days passed and, even making allowance for every sort of obstacle, there were already more than enough for, not only the voyage to the capital of the Archipelago and return, but for the circumnavigation of the Island, I found myself under the necessity of forcing the machine once more, inventing new reasons that might afford an explanation for the delay. There was nothing else to do. I must be the first to be reanimated and I was the one to again comfort my soldiers. I exercised my imagination in finding or inventing some pretext, one which would prolong the hope on which we were living, which would appear to be genuine, and which, in tranquilizing my men, would also satisfy me and animate me as well.

Here is the argument with which, for this once, God inspired me, and by means of which I succeeded in getting over the difficulty: "Look," I said, "in the struggle that we are sustaining against the United States it is no doubt true that we are gaining the upper hand; if not, where would we be? what would have become of us by this time? But this strug-

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gle must be a severe one, long sustained, because it is with a most powerful nation; and, since there are in the Philippines not enough forces to spare any for our rescue, since they will have enough to do in confronting the Americans and Tagálogs. it is evident that we must wait until reinforcements arrive from the Peninsula. They must be already on the way. Let us wait, therefore, and let us fulfill our duty where Fate has placed us. To surrender now, when we have plainly seen that they have not forgotten us, would be to blot out at one stroke the months of meritorious deeds and the hardships that we have borne."

Meanwhile an attempt had been made to give us a neat toasting. On the night of April 20th the sentry in the sacristy fired a shot. I ran to find out what was going on. The sentry informed me that he had shot at something which was approaching, and which, to judge from its size, appeared too big for a dog, and which he thought must be a small carabao. He thought it must have been wounded and that it remained in the same place it was when he fired at it, because from time to time he could see the grass moving.

A little later the sentry at the window to the left of the altar warned me that under the window and next to the wall he thought he heard some men, because he heard the empty tins rattling. It is proper to explain that we had scattered around the building a considerable number of empty cans, in order that we might have, by this means, some warning of the proximity of the enemy.

"Are you sure," I said, "that they are not snails, as on other nights?" (There are a great many snails in that region.) "No, sir," he answered; "the snails go on moving even though the tins rattle, but those that are moving now stop when they make a noise, and it is evident that they are trying

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to avoid the tins. I am sure that they are men and that there are several next to the wall."

From the sacristy we could make out with certainty that there were men under the window of the altar; but they could not be attacked from any direction, because on one side the corner did not permit, and on the other there was a dead angle. There was therefore no means of flanking them and the danger was increasing, with the enemy evidently assembling at the threatened point.

My men were getting uneasy and we were about to run the dangerous risk of a sally, when Vigil, in a moment of inspiration, seized a revolver and, thrusting his arm through the altar window, at the risk of having them lop it off for him, commenced to fire straight down upon the men assembled there. They fled in terror. As they exposed themselves we began firing on them from the sacristy window, and forced them to withdraw completely.

This impulsive act, born of despair and heroism, might have been costly for our companion, since the window was very low; but to him we owed our salvation that night.

The following day, when we proceeded to reconnoiter the place, we found plain indications that several persons had been there crawling along the ground. We also found two fascines that they had already placed on the parapet of the sacristy, twelve others near by, and some heavy sticks, like canes, each marked at one end, the utility of which we were unable to explain to ourselves. All this we appropriated, getting it into the church as best we could. It is certain that, since we were getting short of combustibles, this wood came in very handy in cooking our wretched food.

The importunately urged series of parleys in which I had been engaged just before and this late unlooked-for attempt

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led me to believe that our liberation could not appear to our adversaries a very difficult matter, when they were in such a hurry to bring about our surrender. The supposition was not without foundation, and it induced me to persevere in the defense. But the struggle was, unfortunately, already reaching beyond the limit that could be sustained by human will; and if relief did not come very soon, I saw no end to the affair but death.

On the 24th the beans and coffee gave out. I mean the last remains of them. There was now nothing left to eat but a few handfuls of rice flour, the dust of the *palay* we had hulled, and a few dozen tins of sardines, problematically edible. Our food, besides being scant, was now reduced to a kind of poultice of pumpkin leaves mixed with sardines and a little rice; but we had to reduce even these articles. Those same men who at first would not eat the leaves because, as they said, they lay like a lump in the stomach, soon had to be restrained to prevent them from going out to the trenches and devouring those leaves raw, sprouts and all, without waiting for them to grow.

For the mornings we had in place of coffee a decoction of orange leaves, which we gathered from the trees that were in front of the church. So great was our hunger, in fact, that if a dog came within our reach, a dog was eaten; if a cat, a cat; if reptiles, reptiles; if crows, crows. A certain kind of snail was abundant. The natives loathed them, but it was soon apparent that they were disappearing. All around the church there was an abundance of leafy shrubbery, and it was all stripped, the men not being deterred by the risk, not improbable, of eating some poisonous plant.

And the sea, as the days passed, remained relentlessly desolate.

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VI.

TO THE 27TH OF MAY.

SQUAD OF SHARPSHOOTERS.—ARTILLERYMEN AS TARGETS.—AN EXTRAORDINARY SHOT. — TRAITORS WOUNDED. — ONE ESCAPES.—IN THE STOCKS. — INSULTS AT LONG RANGE. — A CANNON-SHOT. — MERCIFUL COUNSELS. — IF THE TOWER SHOULD FALL.—IMPROVISED STAIRWAYS.—THE FLAG STILL WAVES.

In the preceding chapter I have told of a most remarkable shot made by one of the soldiers, which knocked from the hand of a little boy a letter which he was insisting upon delivering to us. The skill shown was indeed a thing to be marveled at, but it has its explanation. The necessity, and for such a long time, for keeping close watch on the enemy, the desire for a good target, the eagerness to "make a killing" which spurred us constantly, and the deliberation enjoined in firing, had resulted in making some of my men excellent sharpshooters, and to their skill we owed, in large measure, the impotence of the enemy's artillery.

Eight of the best of them performed no night duties, but as soon as it began to grow light, would station themselves in pairs, one pair in the tower, the others below, with no other orders than to watch the batteries closely. The besiegers covered the guns with rush mats. In order to intimidate us, they would also move the modern gun, already referred to, from one place to another.

This proceeding was not without cunning; but, as their cannon were never fired simultaneously, and as it was necessary, in order to sight the guns, to raise the curtains, we soon

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discovered the trick, and promptly succeeded in spreading panic among the artillerists.

We afterwards learned that the panic reached such a pitch that no one was willing to undertake this service; and the fact is, that only by preparing their shots under cover of darkness could they harm us, except in peculiar and rare cases. Such, indeed, was the certainty with which my men fired that to raise the curtain and to at once roll over on the ground was all one thing for anyone attempting to approach the cannon.

After our capitulation, they told us that they had attributed this precision in firing to the fact that we must have fastened our rifles to the loopholes! *Beati pauperes spiritu,* as the Scripture mercifully says.

Among the men wounded, all but slightly, during these days I recall only one, Pedro Planas Basageñas, who was hit for the second time. But on the 7th of May we had to lament one gravely wounded, Salvator Santa Maria Aparicio, who passed away in a few days and whose loss produced on us not only grief, since he was a good soldier, but also wonder on account of the provoking way in which the shot happened unluckily to produce it.

This boy was at the window of the choir which overlooked the *corral,* and the bullet entered through another window to the right and below. Glancing from the wall and tracing an acute angle, it hit him in the side, touching the medulla. It may be said that prejectiles seek their intended victims, while they appear to avoid others, whom they pass by in their perilous flight.

The enemy now settled down to a daily fight, their firing beginning very early in the morning and at the sound of the trumpet, as though it were a matter of stated fatigue duty. They wished, apparently, to keep us constantly in a state of

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anxiety; to waste ammunition in the hope of inflicting on us some damage. And the truth is, that, in spite of the precautions adopted, the cramped situation in which it kept us was very trying.

There was not a crevice, a crack, or a hole free from that annoying fire, constantly and patiently sustained. The object, no doubt, was to prevent my sharpshooters from picking off their artillerists; and for this reason, finding that they did not succeed in their purpose, they reached the conclusion that we must have our rifles aimed and fastened to the walls. Apparently it had not occurred to their warlike imagination that we might have men capable of watching tranquilly in the midst of danger.

Nor was it any small danger that we encountered from one of their shells on the 8th. It pierced the wall of the baptistery, where, prisoners and in irons, were the three men who had planned to desert to the enemy—Vicente González Toca, Antonio Menache Sánchez, and the miserable José Alcáide Bayona. It exploded inside and the three men were wounded, though not seriously, being saved from certain death by the rubbish in which they had half buried themselves.

As the baptistery was only about two meters wide by about two and a half in length, and the place was left in very bad condition, it was necessary to bring the men out in the church, in the center of which beds were arranged for them, and their wounds were looked after as Christianity demanded. I directed that they should remain there until the rubbish could be cleared out of the place where they had been confined, and the hole made by the shell stopped up as well as might be.

The effects of that shell might have been fatal to us, as we shall presently see, but certainly not on account of the damage done by its fragments.

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After the men had been cared for, they appeared to be completely exhausted; which, added to the commiseration that the occurrence could not but produce in us, and the labor of clearing out the rubbish, caused us to be somewhat careless in guarding them. The distraction was brief, a matter of only a few minutes, but it was enough to enable Alcáide to get rid of his irons, breaking them under the bed-covering. Then, suddenly jumping through a near-by window in the east wall, he ran like a deer toward the enemy's trenches.

The sentry who was at the door in the south wall ran around the corner and aimed two shots at him, but did not touch him. Another sentry also fired twice, crying out at the second shot that he had killed him, because he saw him totter as though about to fall. Part of the men started in pursuit at a run; but it was all useless, since, gaining the trenches of the *Insurrectos,* who increased their fire, he succeeded in saving himself, while my men had to fall back, giving way before the energy of the attack.

In order that an idea may be conceived of the boldness and temper of this wretch, whom God may have pardoned, it is enough for the present to say that the window through which he succeeded in making his escape reached a total height of three meters and twenty-five centimeters; and that if the inside platform, which was one and a half meters high, served him as a kind of step, he had to attempt the jump to the outside when wounded, a short time after being apparently stretched out at the point of death, and when, besides being weakened as he was by the poor quality of the rations, his legs must have been bruised and swollen by the irons from which he had just freed himself.

To prevent his companions from attempting to imitate him, we proceeded to construct a kind of stocks, in which we

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fastened them, each by one foot. Our doing this was indeed timely, since, on examination, we saw that they also had loosened their irons.

On the 9th another cannon-shot broke through at a certain point, where we had contrived a sort of cupboard, which served as a place for storage of records. The projectile broke three beams of the floor of the choir, and in exploding smashed the chorister's desk to pieces and wounded and bruised several soldiers, among whom I recall Pedro Villa Garganté and Francisco Real Yuste.

After the capitulation, Alcáide boasted of being the one who fired the shot, profiting thus by the instruction he had received in the artillery arm, in which he had formerly served. We also learned that he had told the *Insurrecto* chief how we were suffering from scarcity of subsistence, informing him in detail of the misery which alone was left to us and of our firm purpose to take refuge in the forest, rather than surrender, when we had reached a point where nothing more remained.

The fact that this man could know all these details, shut up as he had been in the baptistery those two long months, convinced me that some other Judas was keeping the enemy well informed of all that was going on in the Detachment. Fortunately, I became aware of all this when it was no time to make disagreeable inquiries; when everything had been redeemed by the visible deeds that had crowned our efforts; when I could, without danger, avoid the knowledge as to who it might be. But it proved to me once more the uncertainty of the ground that sustained me in the defense, and how much I owed to God and to the loyalty of the majority of my people.

The fact that Alcáide had betrayed my resolution to take to the forest did not surprise me when I learned it after the

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capitulation, as I have already said. I could not but know that he had betrayed me, because from the night following his escape those trenches, instead of remaining silent, were converted into a pulpit from which from time to time they preached to us that we ought not to attempt such a rash thing; that we should ask for a parley; that their Lieutenant-Colonel desired to talk to me; and that he would accept such terms as I might ask.

At other times, and always insisting that it was madness for us to think of taking refuge in the forest, they told us that we had again become one in order to fight the Americans, who had betrayed them; that General Rios was their Secretary of War; that we ought to fraternize; and so on after this manner. I should add that they were preaching all this to us in Spanish and arguing with convincing reasons; but so persuaded were we of their tricks and lies that we gave it all no credit whatever.

As something more worthy of attention appeared to us the threatened destruction of the tower. A couple of cannon-shots had broken to pieces three of its four bells and dismounted the fourth, with the shaking crash that may be imagined, and a small breastwork we had prepared in the belfry had all its parapet destroyed. The tower was all made of wood, of moderate height, and it is needless to say or guess how many shots it would stand or why its foundations were shaken. It was only by the use of props that we were able to sustain it, and these props did not now give any assurance of its safety; because, at the first giving way of any one of them (an easy thing, considering the directions Alcáide could furnish the enemy's gunners), there was no room for doubt that its downfall would be certain.

This would be dangerous for the rest of the building. But,

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as circumstances did not warrant extensive calculations, since in one way or another our stay in the church must be a matter of only a few days, and since the most important thing for us was to utilize the command of the belfry for vigilance, we made effort particularly to re-establish its defensive condition by placing a large box filled with earth to strengthen its shattered parapet. This had to be done under cover of darkness, and with care at the same time to do so without the enemy's discovering the operation.

To this end, I ordered a noise to be made as though we were enjoying a *fiesta,* and the sentry in the choir to sing as though he were joining in the merriment; the latter in order to direct attention to the choir end of the church. The box was put in place without molestation, and we were congratulating ourselves on our cunning, when, on the following day, we discovered that, naturally, neither had the enemy been wasting their time.

They had, in fact, profited, as we had profited, by the darkness of the night and the noise, and had constructed two trenches at only about twenty paces from the *corral.* The worst of it was that one of the trenches, the one at the right, commanded the stairway of the tower, which had been uncovered when we tore down the convent.

Imitating, after a fashion, the expedient adopted by the defenders of Sevastopol, I directed some bedding to be fastened up in order to conceal the opening. But even then we could relieve the sentinels only at night, on account of the continual firing that rained upon the screen. It happened more than once that a cannon-shot broke down our stairway and we had to improvise others, making use of some long and stout bamboos that we had carried away from the Tagálogs, who had used them for reveting their approaches.

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On the 19th of May died, of dysentery, Private Márcos José Petana, another of the martyrs whose remains should sanctify those few handbreadths of soil so earnestly, so furiously contested. Bearing in mind the means of subsistence we had, and the want of salt, from which we suffered during the siege, the truth is that it seems miraculous (laugh if you will) that we did not all die of the same disease.

The weather, the enemy's bullets, and the hurricane had badly torn the flag which was always flying at the top of the tower. To put it in good condition was one of our greatest desires, which some might perhaps call Quixotic; but to do so I had to sharpen my ingenuity. Fortunately, the cassocks that had been used by the acolytes of the church and some of the curtains that had been used to cover the images were red. I had a yellow mosquito bar. All this served perfectly in making the substitute. And one night, when we thought the time had come to renew it, we went up into the tower, and with real enthusiasm (God knows, indeed, that I say it without boasting) we changed that venerable banner, which, on the next day, waved still more proudly, appearing to challenge the besiegers and at the same time to bless us.

Certain it is that we did not add thus a handful of rice to our stores, nor one cartridge more to our ammunition; but it is no less certain that the change warmed up our spirits, and that the sight of that venerable banner waving over us under the vault of heaven inspired us with the thought that all Spain was regarding us and was encouraging us with the promise of its gratitude, if we should do our duty as good men. I say it so seemed to us, because I remember the feeling for myself, and it shone in the eyes, filled at times, of those men who were dying under my orders.

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VII.

THE END OF MAY.

PLAN FOR A SALLY.—NIGHT LABORS.—UTILITY OF HOT WATER.—EIGHTEEN DEAD.—A PARLEY.—LIEUTENANT-COLONEL AGUILAR.—NATURAL MISTRUST.—STEAMER OR LIGHTER?—TAKING A SIESTA.—LET THEM WITHDRAW.

In eagerly watching the lonely ocean we passed the hours of that bitter period when we felt all hope leaving us like the mists of the morning. Each twilight carried away with it something of our vigor and spirit. Each night left us more gloomy. The steamer did not appear, and the situation was critical. We saw that the end was already at hand, an end as sad as it was inevitable, and in vain we tried to put it off: everything had its limit, and our strength was fast giving out.

When the crisis should come, therefore, there would not be a single moment to lose. If the longed-for ship should appear, we would have to hazard, on the spot, everything on one play; to reach the ship or die, and this, I repeat, without any delay. Otherwise there remained no course but to take to the forest, to go there or surrender.

On the 28th, it might have been about eleven o'clock at night, the corporal of the relief warned me that people were heard moving about the *corral*.

I ordered the troops to get up and place themselves, very silently, at the loopholes. When all were at their posts, I went to the top of the wall overlooking the place pointed out and tried to see if anyone were there.

There was nothing to be seen, but the sound was unmistakable, as though they were scraping a wall; and I figured

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it out that someone must be hidden behind the wall that divided the *corral* into two parts, or else, from the outside and very close to the wall, they were trying to pierce it.

I continued to listen until, after some time, everything was silent. The clearness and stillness of the night left no room for any idea that I might have been mistaken. But I could not make out whether or not the wall had actually been pierced. Supposing the worst (that is, that they had made holes in order to command the place where we had dug the well), I ordered those not on guard to retire to rest, and that the guard should warn me of the slightest suspicious occurrence. I positively prohibited anyone from going into the *corral* in the morning until I, as I did daily, had made a careful examination all around the church.

While the nights were all bad, that night was one of the most agonizing of the whole siege. I had the conviction that if, in a very few days, we should receive no help, we were lost. The desperate recourse of taking to the forest offered me no other attraction than a tragic change in the climax of that drama. I was, in fact, almost fixed in the idea that all was lost for us, and this was almost reduced to that vague hope that comforts the dying in his last agonies.

We wished to end it once for all; and yet that dread of being annihilated by force of numbers, under the feet of our odious enemies, hearing the insults of our vile deserters, was a thing that hammered, so to speak, my brain, froze my blood, and deprived me of the serenity that I so greatly needed in those difficult circumstances.

It was hardly light before I could see the certainty of my conjectures of the night. A window that we had closed in the west wall of the *corral* had been completely loopholed, and, besides, they had torn away our urinal in order to fire at us

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from the breach thus made. Their purpose was, as I had feared, to prevent us from approaching the well, so that thirst would compel our surrender.

Well had they been instructed by the disclosures of the miserable Alcáide Bayona. And yet we could congratulate ourselves that our foresight had prevented something still more serious—their rendering the well of no use. Fortunately, we had closed it in and covered it with a trap-door, upon which we had put some empty tins, so that a noise would be made if anyone should attempt to interfere with the well. Stationed opposite was the sentry in the choir, with positive orders to fire in case he should hear anything suspicious. They must have known this, and therefore did not dare attempt anything more.

When it was broad daylight, their trumpets sounded the "attention" and our counter-signal, and one of them yelled "Oranges!" We saw that they were preparing for a fight. Supposing that we could not draw water for cooking the orange leaves which we had substituted for coffee, they had called out to us as they did.

I immediately ordered the best shots to occupy the trenches that were on that side, so that those of the enemy who were under the shelter of the wall would be well looked after if they tried to get away. I posted others at the wall which divided the *corral,* in order to neutralize the enemy's command of the interior; and I rushed out with some soldiers with shovels and other tools to close up the openings.

I succeeded in this; and while those without were trying to pierce the wall again, I ordered water to be heated in some iron pots that we had, as large as cauldrons. When we got it boiling, we fastened to the end of a stick one of the tins that had contained Australian beef, and used this to pour the boiling water on the men on the other side of the wall.

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The result could not have been more satisfactory; and, although it seems unbecoming to the sentiments of humanity, which are always beclouded in such situations as the one we were in, I must add that the sensation felt by us could not have been more pleasing.

As the adversaries were almost naked, they must have felt their flesh cooking when the water fell on them, and their rat-like squeaks greatly excited our mirth. They ran from side to side, but always sticking close to the wall, trying to keep out of our fire, while we on our side followed them up, prescribing for them our seasonable showers of bullets. They cried out that we were trying to scald them, like chickens (*manóg* in Tagálog), while we jokingly asked them if they found the coffee too hot. At the same time, from the bench inside the wall, we pursued them with revolver-shots.

One man, wounded in the thigh, began to shriek loudly, and, feigning a kindly interest, we asked him if he was hurt. It was a moment not to be forgotten, in which desperation gave us courage and the damage we caused acted as a tonic in our afflictions.

Not being able longer to do anything for themselves, they begged those in the nearest trenches to fire, in order to cover their retreat. On hearing this, I sent word to my sharpshooters that they must see to it that none should be allowed to escape. The result was completely satisfactory to us, since only two were able to rejoin their comrades, who had their trench, as I have said, only about twenty paces from the church.

Eighteen were left dead, as their companions afterwards told us; and as this victory was the last of the feats of arms that the siege afforded, it may well be claimed that we closed it worthily.

I shall now tell the story of the last but one of the par-

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leys we held. In all the former ones they had offered us an honorable withdrawal, but we had rejected them all in spite of the misery in which we were living; but in this one the measure had become filled to the brim.

A chief of the Army who, so they told us, brought documents in proof of his personality and authority, guaranteed us a safe departure and a comfortable journey to the capital of the Archipelago. Nothing more could be asked; and our situation had reached a most lamentable extreme.

But why did we not agree to it? It would be somewhat difficult for me to explain; principally, I believe, through mistrust and obstinacy, then also on account of a certain kind of auto-suggestion that had grown up in us by force of thinking day after day and month after month that we ought not on any account to surrender; in a certain sense, because of the intoxication of national enthusiasm; without doubt influenced by the attractive illusion of glory; much on account of self-love; and certainly, as I have observed at one time and another, on account of the sufferings we had undergone, on account of that treasury of sacrifice and heroism which in our own eyes exalted us, and which, in some way, without our being conscious of so exalted a sentiment, by instinct, no more, made us feel that we would be putting an unworthy end to it all.

An hour, more or less, having passed since the fight was over, the sounding of the "attention" assailed our ears, and we saw that they were displaying the Spanish flag. As it had never occurred to them before to raise it, I imagined it was simply another artifice to entertain us, so that they could carry away their dead that had been left near the walls of the *corral*. But, as it suited us for them to do this, and as the incident excited my curiosity, I cried out to them that I would

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accept a conference provided that only one came forward with the flag. They indicated that they agreed, and a gentleman advanced dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel of the General Staff. He said that he was Don Cristóbal Aguilar y Castañeda, commissioned by General Don Diego de los Ríos to bring in the Detachment.

The long period during which we had been cut off from communication must be borne in mind; the tricks and artifices by which they had tried to entrap us; and, in particular, those recent speeches they had shouted at us during the night, affirming that Ríos was their Minister of War. It must all be borne in mind, because it all justified my natural mistrust on this occasion.

It appeared to us at once an impossible thing that a Spanish general should become a part of the *Insurrecto* Government; but we were ignorant of the events that had taken place. The coincidence of conferring on this same individual the authority to withdraw us with his attempt to do so right on the heels of the occurrences of the morning was hardly compatible with such orders, of which they must have already had knowledge in the enemy's camp before their frustrated attempt. I believe, therefore, that reasons were not wanting for me to doubt the emissary's veracity, doubts that could not but increase my suspicions with regard to the proofs and documents which, proceeding from that General, were to be offered to me.

They had before told us also that their Lieutenant-Colonel wished to speak to us; and this was enough for me, on seeing Señor Aguilar with his two gilt straps, to take him for that same officer decked out in the uniform he was displaying.

As soon as we began to talk and he had informed me of the commission he bore, he asked me if there was in the Detachment any soldier who, by reason of having been in Min-

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danao, could recognize him. I answered in the negative, and added that there on the outside, in the trenches from which he had come, was certainly the place where there were plenty of his personal acquaintances.

"If," he said, "you doubt that I am Lieutenant-Colonel Aguilar, I can show you papers that identify me." And he drew out a large envelope. "It is not necessary," I replied, "for you to trouble yourself."

He kept the papers and continued, saying that he had a steamer at his disposal (we had not seen any) to take us to Manila; that if we desired to see it, we could indicate the part of the sea that was visible from the tower, so that he could order it to cruise in that vicinity, making such signals as would suit us in order to convince us.

I accepted his offer that they would make it sail past the *Confites,* and fire a couple of cannon-shots toward the mountains; to which he made some objection about alarming the besiegers, and averred that the vessel carried only one small gun. "Yes," I replied, smiling; "the one you have yonder" (pointing to the one the enemy had). "Is it not so?"

After a few more words, we finally agreed that the steamer should show herself the following morning where I had indicated (near the *Confites*), and that it would let go two cannon-shots.

I was really perplexed. The manner and language of Señor Aguilar showed him to be a person of distinction. The ease with which he wore the uniform denoted that he was accustomed to it. But when, even considering all this, I considered also certain other details, such as his presenting himself immediately after the enemy's repulse, and the quiet way in which those same people who had not allowed the disembarkation of the former succoring party now allowed him to come

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to us, I could not but hesitate, in the confusion of my vague suspicions.

Recalling, on the other hand, the matter of General Ríos, it all appeared to explain to me why Aguilar might have gone over to the Tagálogs, if he had gone over; since it was clear that some others would have followed Ríos, and perhaps Aguilar might have been one of them.

In order to satisfy myself as to whether he had really belonged to the General Staff, judging by the effect that a question might have upon him, I thought of asking him, when I should see him again, if it was no longer regulation to wear the sash tied as it formerly was; but I refrained from the experiment, through fear that it might turn out futile and puerile.

Being of the opinion that the whole thing was a farce, and assured that they would do something towards carrying it out, I cautioned those in the tower to notify me if they heard any cannon-shot or saw the vessel.

It was perhaps about ten o'clock in the morning of the 30th when the first report sounded. I hurried up into the tower, provided with field-glasses, and had no more than arrived when we heard the second one, and so distinctly that we believed it came from the beach.

It was not long before the steamer appeared. It proceeded toward the locality agreed upon, drawing farther and farther away, and, apparently, into the shore waters. It tacked then toward the coast, and very soon turned again, going back over the course.

Being deceived at first by an optical illusion, a thing easy to understand if we take into consideration the distance that separated us from the sea and the boscage that covered this distance, we then began to reflect that it was navigating in water where it was hardly deep enough to reach to a man's

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waist. We had bathed there many times and those places were well known to us. This, added to the ease with which it changed its course, caused us to suspect that it must have been propelled by native hands; and, in the obsession that dominated us, we concluded certainly that all this was a comedy, and that the alleged steamer was nothing but a lighter theatrically dressed up and rigged for the purpose of mocking us. So true was this that some of the soldiers were betting that the funnel was made of *nipa,* and others were sure that they could see those who were towing the contrivance.

Twelve o'clock came, and, seeing that Señor Aguilar had not appeared, I said to my companions: "The enemy proposes that we shall not rest during the *siesta* hour, so that we shall be overcome by sleep at night and they will be able to surprise us. You will see that this Lieutenant-Colonel will not come until we close the door." (We closed it every afternoon.) I gave orders to the sentinels that if he should appear, they should tell him to come back at half past three, because I had gone to sleep. So it was. I had just lain down when he came.

They informed him as I directed; and, although he insisted vehemently that they should call me, he had to withdraw. But at three o'clock they notified me that he was already in sight again. Ordering the Corporal not to open the door, I went up into the choir to again take up the conference from one of the windows in the same manner as I had done the evening before, without sticking out my head.

He began by asking me if we had seen the steamer. "Yes, sir," I replied; "but who would imagine that we could go in that vessel, having to take with us the quantity of subsistence stores we have left, the ammunition, the artillery, and the large amount of hospital and other supplies that are stored here."

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"Man, no," he replied; "it does not have to be taken away."

"Then what shall we do with it?"

"Deliver it to this family" (the besiegers).

"Deliver it to this family!" I said in astonishment.

"Yes, man, yes. Are you surprised? Why, if you had seen what we gave up in Zamboanga—"

I turned to the soldiers who were around me and said in a low tone: "You see, it is the same old song. What they are after is our arms."

"Shall I kill him, my Lieutenant?" asked one of the men, examining his rifle.

"By no means," I hastened to say, restraining him; "we may refuse to receive flags of truce, but we cannot commit assassination, which, besides, might entail very serious consequences."

Señor Aguilar continued, trying to persuade me to his wishes, and doing so, I must confess, in such terms that I could not help saying to my hearers as soon as he had gone away, "It is a pity that a man like that should have gone over to the *Insurrectos*."

He asked me if I would allow him to have a look at the church (and the Detachment), because he had seen a photograph of it in Manila. I refused this, as being prohibited, and he agreed with me, but added with some impatience that our obstinacy was wrong, and that such madness could only result in a catastrophe.

"And is it right," I asked in conclusion, "does it appear to you proper for us to allow the *Insurrectos* to enter here in order that they may cut our throats? They have attacked me and they keep on attacking me. I, for my part, restrict myself to the defense. If peace has been made, let them set the

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example by withdrawing first. Tell the General that I still have rations enough for three months."

The night before the rice-dust had completely given out, and there were only a few cans of sardines left.

I then added: "If the three months should pass without a war-vessel or Spanish forces coming for us, I shall go to Manila and present myself with the people I can save, however long I may be in getting there in the roundabout ways by which I may have to go."

He concluded by asking me if, in case General Ríos should come, I would obey his orders. I said, "Yes; I should obey them without hesitation." And he went away, leaving a bundle of newspapers on the ground.

There, in one of those papers, involved in a brief notice, which was of a kind least to be looked for, was at last the end of that Calvary.

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VIII.

LAST DAYS.

TO THE FOREST.—PREPARATIONS.—UNAVOIDABLE FIRING.—THE BESIEGERS CARRY THEIR VIGILANCE TO EXTREMES. — WE MAKE A SALLY IN FORCE.—UNEXPECTED NEWS.—SHALL WE CAPITULATE?—VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.—A PARLEY.—DICTATING TERMS.—ACT OF CAPITULATION.

In saying that I would obey the orders of General Ríos, if he should come personally to give them to me, I was inspired by no other idea than that of gaining a few days. I had been fully convinced that they were trying to deceive me; but now the miserable notion that had been working in my brain was affirmed by hearing the friars who had been taken in by the dead Las Morenas say that the Minister of War matter might be so, since they thought they had heard that the General had married a *Filipina.*

I reflected that while they were getting advice to the General and he was journeying to us, a week would pass during which these people would let us alone. Taking advantage of the calm, we would make for the forest, and, when they would least expect it, they would find the church empty; because, if they thought we were deceived, and were resolved to surrender, it was not unlikely that they would relax their vigilance, and we could make our escape without difficulty.

As soon as Señor Aguilar withdrew, I ordered the bundle of papers to be brought in, and we began to compare them critically with others we had. I remember that the most important of our comparisons was among several copies of *El Imparcial,* in which we could not find any differences other

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than those natural in editing. We marveled greatly at the similarity in typography, the exactness as to size, and even as to the quality of the paper. But remembering the wonderful dexterity of those Island people in imitating, I said, after taking everything into consideration: "It is nothing; as these people have the material for the purpose, they have devoted themselves to copying our daily papers in their eagerness for us to swallow their hook."

It is with suspicion as it is ordinarily with enthusiasm or fear: it is contagious, and none of my men were induced to wish to surrender. We ended then, in a way least to be expected in reason, by regarding all those papers as apocryphal, disdaining to read them, making no account of them, and in getting ready for our contemplated flight.

In the first place, I ordered all the lamps that were hanging before some of the altars taken down and the ropes by which they were suspended to be carefully prepared so as to serve us in crossing the many rivers that we should certainly find on our way. Some of the men did not know how to swim, and I planned that on arriving at a stream that could not be forded, a good swimmer would cross, taking one end of a rope, and, on reaching the opposite bank, would tie it to a tree or rock that would afford sufficient resistance; fastened on our side in the same manner and made properly taut, the men would pass over by clinging to the rope. Another swimmer would bring up the rear, and, when all had safely passed the obstacle, would undo the fastening, and we would all reassemble.

I ordered also that leather slippers should be made to replace the worn-out ones, and that the men who were still without should be shod by using the cartridge-boxes and leather equipments taken from the dead.

I fixed the date for the night of the 1st of June, and on

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the morning of that day I proceeded to burn the superfluous rifles, as well as a Remington and another rifle which we had found in the *Comandancia.* I distributed the ammunition that yet remained and issued to each man a new blanket; and, in accordance with powers conferred on me by Articles 35. and 36 of the Code of Military Justice, yielding, much against my will, to the force of circumstances, I ordered to be shot at once Corporal Vicente González Toca and Private Antonio Menache Sánchez, guilty, and confessedly so, of the crime of treason at a besieged post, and liable, moreover, to the punishment of death ordered by the Captain-General of the Archipelago, Don Basilio Augustí, in his solemn proclamation of April 28, 1898.

The execution took place without legal formalities, which were utterly impossible, but not without the justification of the crime. It was a terrible and painful measure, which I could have taken immediately on discovering the facts, and which I ought to have imposed without further delay when the desertion was attempted; which I had continued to delay with the desire and hope that someone else would decide it and end it, but which was now, unfortunately, indispensably necessary.

It grieved me much to come to this determination, and I sought for a subterfuge by which I could free myself from the responsibility. But I could not find it without myself being chargeable with laxity in command, and, above all, with compromising our safety during the withdrawal. It was very bitter, but it was very necessary. I proceeded serenely, fulfilling my duty. For that reason, no doubt, the tranquillity of my conscience has never been disturbed.

In order to prevent the enemy from making use of any of the remains of the arms destroyed, I had the barrels placed

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in the pit that had been prepared for the bodies of the executed men, before they were buried, and the small parts were scattered around the outside of the church. This done, we waited for the night to come.

During the day my men, such was their need, stripped off everything edible, leaves and shoots, that was still left in our little plantations; and, although our proposed undertaking was one of those that only extreme desperation could counsel, they all showed their impatient joy that the hour was now coming when they would abandon that gloomy place, where was not wanting, to give it that character, even the horror of a sad cemetery of executed men.

At length it grew dark, but in the quiet of the night we noticed that vigilance was increasing in an extraordinary manner throughout the *Insurrecto* trenches. There was no moon, but the sky was so clear that we could not get away without being discovered immediately. There was nothing for us to do, therefore, except to hide our disappointment and to put off our march until the following night, in the hope that we might be favored by some carelessness on the part of the enemy, and with the determination that if we could not succeed in getting out without discovery, we would charge at once on the strongest part of the works—that is, where it might be supposed we would be least likely to attempt a sally. To this end, I made all swear that if anyone should, unfortunately, remain in the hands of the enemy, he would not say a word nor make a sign that would indicate the direction in which we might go.

On the following morning, when it was scarcely light, I picked up the newspapers again. Throughout the night the strange fact that they had been made to resemble the genuine ones in a most remarkable manner had possessed my mind, and something instinctively counselled me to read them. Without

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any expectation, then, that my suspicions would disappear, I began to glance over their columns, marveling at the ingenuity that had been wasted in the attempt to deceive us and to make us surrender.

I was still admiring, my mind more and more struck with the skillfulness of the work, when a small article of only two lines caused me to tremble with astonishment. It was the simple notice that a lieutenant of the Infantry Reserve, Don Francisco Díaz Navarro, was ordered to take station at Málaga. But that officer had been my companion and intimate friend in the Bourbon Regiment; it had fallen to his lot to go to Cuba; and I knew very well that he had resolved to ask for station at Málaga, where his family and his sweetheart lived.

That could not have been invented. Those papers were therefore Spanish, and all they said was true. It was then not false that the colonies had been lost, that we had been rudely despoiled, that this little bit of the earth that we had defended even to madness was not now our own; and, as Señor Aguilar said, there was no reason for our obstinacy in defending it.

It was, to me, the ray of light that suddenly illumined the pit in which we were about to fall headlong. In withdrawing to the forest it had not been my purpose to remain in it like Igorrote savages, and as to reaching Manila, I knew that it was an undertaking about as impossible as an ascent to the Mountains of the Moon. But I expected to gain the coast; to remain there in some secluded refuge, waiting for the passing of our war-ships, which, since the *Yorktown* incident, I thought were navigating freely; and, by firing and raising a large flag that we had made of the available material, to attract the attention of the first one that might pass, so that

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we could be picked up and saved. The disaster to Spain having occurred, as I now no longer doubted, this last hope disappeared, and to take my soldiers into the depths of the forest would be to deliver them miserably to death.

I could see nothing for it, therefore, but surrender. I at once assembled my command and announced that the moment had come to treat with the enemy. Some of those brave men, their eyes filled with tears, did not appear to be convinced, and others argued that "the boiling water incident was very recent," and that "the enemy would burn us alive."

Choking with tears and passion, I persisted in convincing the former that there was no other door of safety open to us; and, in order to dissipate the fears that influenced the latter (well-founded ones certainly), I replied to them somewhat as follows:

"Lieutenant-Colonel Aguilar is undoubtedly the commanding officer of the forces that surround us. You noticed at once that he appeared to be a distinguished person and very well experienced in military matters. I thought so, and I am sure that he would not permit the maltreatment of those who deserve, as in our case, the title of meritorious soldiers, victims of the love of country. The tenacity of our defense was based on the strict carrying out of the provisions of the Field Regulations, the Code of Military Justice, the Code of Honor, our Ordinances, and, finally, the Proclamation of the Captain-General of the Archipelago, Señor Augustí. We have done, then, only our duty loyally, giving an example worthy rather of admiration than of punishment. And, finally, although they might not so consider it, I am, after all, the only one responsible for all that has happened, and I alone can be the one who might have to pay, principally for having ordered the arms buried."

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"Do as it seems best to you," they answered; "you are the one who understands it."

I immediately wrote a very short statement of the conditions under which we would surrender, and proposed to the men that if they were not accepted, we should sally forth to death or life as God willed. All this was approved unanimously, and I at once ordered the white flag to be raised and the trumpeter to sound the "attention." Unforgetable moment!

Immediately an *Insurrecto* sentinel advanced, and I called to him to summon Lieutenant-Colonel Aguilar. After a short time, a major, a native also, advanced and told us that just then that officer was not with them, but that their Lieutenant-Colonel, who was in command and who was dressing, would come at once. Nor did the latter keep us waiting. When he had come within easy speaking distance, I informed him of our wishes, but warned him with these final words:

"Do not imagine that I am in the water up to my neck. I still have rations for several days, and if you do not accede to the terms I think of proposing, you may be certain that, rather than surrender, I shall march with my men to the forest, assaulting your trenches."

He replied that I might draw up the capitulation in such terms as I thought best, provided always that they were not in calumniation of the *Insurrectos*. He also volunteered the assurance that we should be permitted to retain our arms as far as the limit of their jurisdiction, where we would give them up.

Such a generous offer, which indicates the most distinguished honor that can be paid on such occasions, dissipated in great measure our distrust, and it goes without saying that we would have accepted it with enthusiasm; but I saw that my men were becoming weaker and weaker and their strength

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seemed to be leaving them entirely as we saw the end of all our troubles. I understood that it was entirely impossible for us to make a single day's march carrying those arms; which, moreover, might serve as a pretext for some vexation.

I therefore drew up the following agreement, which was accepted without changes or discussion:

"In Baler, on the second day of June, eighteen ninety-nine, 2d Lieutenant Don Saturnino Martin Cerezo, commanding Spanish Detachment; ordered the trumpeter to sound the 'attention' and 'parley,' raising the white flag as a signal of capitulation; being answered at once by the trumpeter of the besieging force. And the commanders and officers of both forces being assembled, they agreed upon the following terms:

"*First.* From this date hostilities on both sides are suspended.

"*Second.* The besieged lay down their arms, delivering them to the Commander of the besieging force, together with the military equipments and other effects belonging to the Spanish Government.

'*Third.* The besieged force do not become prisoners of war, but shall be escorted by the Republican troops to a point where Spanish troops may be found, or to a place from which they may safely join the latter.

"*Fourth.* Private property to be respected, and no injury to be done to individuals.

"And, for the purpose of carrying it into effect, this agreement is executed in duplicate, being signed by the following gentlemen: Lieutenant-Colonel Simon Tecson, commanding the besieging force; Major Nemesio Bartolomé; Captain Francisco T. Ponce; Second Lieutenant, commanding the besieged force, Saturnino Martin; Doctor Rogelio Vigil."

Thus terminated the Siege of the Church of Baler, on the three hundred and thirty-seventh day from its beginning, when we now had nothing edible to put in our mouths, nor was it humanly possible to sustain it a single day longer.

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There was no affliction that had been wanting to us in that humble spot, designed only for religious supplications; neither the inclemencies of the weather, nor the rigor of the siege, nor the blows of treason, nor the pestilence. Hunger with its irresistible pangs, death without help, isolation with its crushing weight, deception that overwhelms the most vigorous powers of the soul, and the maddening helplessness that afflicts it, all contributed to harass and overcome us.

There is much to sustain a man's resolution in the assault of the enemy's battery, in crossing bayonets with him during the tumult of battle. But it is a thing most difficult for him to struggle, day after day and week after week, against the obsession that pursues him, to sustain himself behind walls that the enemy is demolishing, and not to give way to the languor of utter weariness.

Such is the merit of the defenders of Baler, of that poor church where, for ten months after the loss of our sovereignty in the Philippines, the Spanish flag continued to wave.

END OF CEREZO'S NARRATIVE.

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AFTER THE SIEGE.

Lieutenant Cerezo's narrative of the events following the surrender, of the march over the mountains and across the low central plain to Tarlak, of the treatment of the survivors there, of the journey down the railroad to Manila, and of the reception there and in the Homeland, will be given very briefly. After the story of the siege itself, the later happenings are, with few exceptions, of comparatively little interest to the general reader, although we can easily understand how much it all meant to the ragged, emaciated survivors themselves.

When, the capitulation having been signed, the time came to throw open the doors of the church, the survivors were somewhat apprehensive, not only because of the irregular character of the besieging force, which had been severely punished by the besieged, but also because there were among them some vile deserters, from whom everything was to be feared at the first opportunity.

As the shooting of the two deserters, in the church, might cause some violence, the Doctor stood ready to certify that the deaths of González Toca and Menache were due to dysentery, and on different dates, while the men were cautioned that they should asseverate the same thing until they were safely among their own people.

The Detachment set out from Baler during the afternoon of June 7th. The first night was spent at San José de Casignán, and the next day the command passed over the Caraballos. The fatiguing nature of this march can be imagined from Cerezo's statement that they crossed one river seventy-two

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times, such were the confused windings it described in its course; and that it had to be forded by men in groups, because the current would have swept away individuals alone.

The march to Tarlak, where the Filipino Government was then established, took the party through Pantabangán, Bongábon, Cabanatúan, Aliaga, and La Paz. During the first half of the journey, in spite of repeated messages from Aguinaldo directing that the Detachment should be treated with the greatest consideration, Cerezo was subjected to no little annoyance, and even suffering, brought about by the vindictiveness of Gregorio Expósito and Alcáide Bayona, and, as Cerezo believed, by the cupidity of the Filipino officers who commanded the escort.

At Pantabangán an attempt was made during the night to rob and kill Cerezo and Doctor Vigil, who had been lodged in one of the best houses, which the officers of the escort had been "kind" enough to reserve. The only sufferer in this attack was Cerezo, who, in jumping from a window, sustained a painful dislocation of an ankle, which caused great delay in the march and from which he did not recover until after the survivors had left Manila for home.

The very next day, on nearing Bongábon, a carabao, on which was loaded the effects, official papers, etc., of Cerezo and Vigil, was forcibly taken from the Spanish soldier who had it in charge. Although complaint was made to two Filipino officers, who had formerly belonged to the Spanish Army, and they admitted that the *tulisanes* (robbers) were probably some of the escort, and promised that search would be made for the effects, they staid lost.

At Cabanatúan a hospital had been established by the natives for sick and wounded Spaniards, where Cerezo was taken, in order that he might receive treatment for his ankle, which,

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for lack of facilities, had been neglected, and did not give him a moment's ease.

The Spanish from Baler, with the escort, now continued their march. "With them," says Cerezo, "disappeared forever from my sight the villainous Alcáide Bayona. Here is an account of his death: On April 1, 1900, Captain Don Inocencio Lafuente Peiro disembarked at Barcelona, bringing a detachment of repatriated men, among whom figured my old deserter orderly, Felipe Herrero López, and the said Alcáide, locked in the brig. Very black must have been the thoughts of Alcáide, since he absolutely refused food or drink. In vain were the efforts, the man's mouth even being forced open with a key, to make him receive sustenance. Stubborn in his purpose, the wretched man allowed himself to die of starvation."

Two weeks passed and Cerezo was still unable to use his foot, when, early in the morning of the 29th, a telegram was received from Aguinaldo, directing the Spaniards who might be able to proceed at once to Tarlak, in order that, taking advantage of the passing through there of the Spanish Commission which was arranging for the liberation of Spanish prisoners, they could go with it to Manila. All but Cerezo set out, and the Military Governor so telegraphed to the General, who replied that, using all means proper to Cerezo's condition, they should send him on without delay, since it was necessary for him to accompany the troops to Manila.

As it was impossible for Cerezo to ride a horse, a *canga* was furnished, in which, for greater comfort, a large armchair was placed. A *canga* is a sort of wheelless cart, which is dragged along the ground, and which must have been invented in prehistoric times. This primitive affair was, however, well suited to the muddy roads, and by means of it Cerezo finally arrived, July 3d, at Tarlak.

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It was here that Cerezo and his men began to receive the rewards and honors that were extended to them in abundance until long after they reached Spain. Aguinaldo not only ordered everything necessary for their comfort, but he furnished them (and for this they were more grateful than for anything else) copies of newspapers in which was published a decree of his, declaring them "worthy of the admiration of the world for the valor, constancy, and heroism with which that handful of men, cut off and without hope of any aid, has defended their flag for the space of a year, realizing an epic so glorious and so worthy of the legendary valor of the Cid."

The railroad being interrupted for some distance north of San Fernando, which was occupied by the Americans under General MacArthur, the party left the train at Angeles, and Cerezo and some others were lodged in the house of the Filipino General Mascardo, whose name will have a familiar sound to some of the military readers of this book. Mascardo entertained them with a banquet in the afternoon and a dance at night, at which were present the most distinguished *señoritas* of the town.

On the following day the party proceeded towards San Fernando in *quilezes* and *carromatas,* the vehicles common in that country. After sustaining an upset, by which the *quilez* in which Cerezo was riding was reduced to a skeleton, they arrived at Bacolor, three or four miles from San Fernando, where it was necessary to have a parley with the Americans for permission to pass. Orders had already been given for the train to start for Manila, but it was held for the party, and by it they proceeded to the capital, where Cerezo was lodged in the palace of Santa Potenciana.

While in Manila the survivors were showered with financial aid, congratulations, entertainments, and civilities of all

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kinds, in such profusion that Cerezo says: "Perhaps if, sometimes, in my hours of frightful dejection, I may have dreamed a phantasm of rewards and glory, certain it is that I never could have imagined that I should gain them so abundantly."

But there was a fly in the ointment. There had been severe criticism concerning the motives that impelled the defenders of Baler to prolong the siege; hints that there was something that prevented them from wishing to return to Spain, for fear of punishment; that because Las Morenas and Alonso wished to surrender, their deaths had been by violence. As to these imputations our author says: "I refrain from staining these pages with a relation of that stupid invention, made in a cowardly manner to vilify the defenders of Baler, in the belief, perhaps, that no one would be left alive. Nevertheless, I must not conceal the fact that often, in thinking of it, I have a feeling of horror; because it has occurred to me, naturally, that if the church had been taken by assault and we had all met death, that infamous calumny would have been spread abroad to blacken our memory."

On July 20th the survivors embarked on the steamer *Alicante,* and on September 1st they reached Barcelona.

The Detachment now being broken up, Cerezo, after clearing his accounts at Tarragona, proceeded to Madrid, and finally, on the 1st, to his native town Miajades, in the Province of Cáceres.

All Spain had been stirred by the accounts concerning our little band of resolute men, and all stood ready to do them honor.

On reaching Barcelona they were met by the principal authorities of the city, who afterwards transmitted the congratulations of Barcelona to Cerezo, and through him to the individuals of the Detachment, who, "in the midst of the disasters

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that have afflicted Spain, knew how to add one more page to the Golden Book of her history."

At Madrid Cerezo was met and entertained by an officer of His Majesty's Household Troops, by the Minister of War, and committees from the garrison; and when he reached his own town, the people illuminated and decorated the streets, conducted him in procession to the church—in fact, "threw the house out of the window" in celebration of his return.

The cities of Cáceres and Trujillo also honored Cerezo by declaring him, by resolution of their corporations, "the adoptive son" of those cities.

More substantial rewards came, of course, from the Government itself. Under date of September 4, 1899, there was published a royal order, in which each member of the Detachment was thanked in His Majesty's name, and in which it was decreed that general orders of the Army be published expressing "the satisfaction with which the country had learned of their glorious conduct, in order that it might serve as an example to those who wear the military uniform"; by royal orders of a later date there was granted to each officer, living and dead, increased rank; to Doctor Vigil was granted the cross of the first class of Maria Cristina; and to each of the thirty-one men of the Detachment the silver cross of military merit, with a small monthly pension for life; and, the proper proceedings having been had before the Supreme Council of War and Marine, there was conceded to Major Las Morenas and to Captain Cerezo, each, the Cross-Laureate of San Fernando, and annual pensions to Cerezo and to the widow of Las Morenas.

Finally, in Cerezo's own town, the Corporation had an extraordinary session, at which, besides the Councillors, were present Cerezo himself and the local military and ecclesiastical authorities; and resolutions were adopted, that the street in

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which the gallant defender of Baler was born should be hereafter known as Martin Cerezo Street; that a tablet should be placed on the house in which he was born; and that a popular fund should be raised, having for its object the presentation of a sword of honor to Captain Don Saturnino Martin Cerezo, as a remembrance from his countrymen.

THE END.

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APPENDIX.

I.

LIST OF THE BESIEGED.

POLITICO-MILITARY COMMANDANT OF EL PRINCIPE.

Don Enrique de las Morenas y Fossi, Captain of Infantry.

DETACHMENT OF BALER, BELONGING TO THE SECOND EXPEDITIONARY BATTALION.

Second Lieutenant Don Juan Alonso Zayas. Died October 18, 1898, of disease.

Second Lieutenant Don Saturnino Martin Cerezo.

Corporal Vicente González Toca. Shot June 1, 1899.

Corporal José Chaves Martin. Died October 10, 1898, of disease.

Corporal Jesús García Quijano.

Corporal José Olivares Conejero.

Trumpeter Santos González Roncal.

Private Felipe Herrero López. Deserted June 27, 1898.

Private Félix García Torres. Deserted June 29, 1898.

Private Julián Galvete Iturmendi. Died July 31, 1898, of wounds.

Private Juan Chamizo Lucas.

Private José Hernández Arocha.

Private José Lafarga Abad. Died October 22, 1898, of disease.

Private Luis Cervantes Dato.

Private Manuel Menor Ortega.

Private Vicente Pedrosa Carballeda.

Private Antonio Bauza Fullana.

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Private Antonio Menache Sánchez. Shot June 1, 1899.

Private Baldomero Larrode Paracuello. Died November 9, 1898, of disease.

Private Domingo Castro Camarena.

Private Eustaquio Gopar Hernández.

Private Eufemio Sánchez Martínez.

Private Emilio Fabregat Fabregat.

Private Felipe Castillo Castillo.

Private Francisco Roviro Mompó. Died September 30, 1898, of disease.

Private Francisco Real Yuste.

Private Juan Fuentes Damián. Died November 8, 1898. of disease.

Private José Pineda Turán.

Private José Sanz Meramendi. Died February 13, 1899, of disease.

Private José Jiménez Berro.

Private José Alcaíde Bayona. Deserted May 8, 1899.

Private José Martínez Santos.

Private Jaime Caldentey Nadal. Deserted August 3, 1898.

Private Loreto Gallego García.

Private Marcos Mateo Conesa.

Private Miguel Perez Leal.

Private Miguel Méndez Expósito.

Private Manuel Navarro León. Died November 9, 1898, of disease.

Private Marcos José Petanas. Died May 9, 1899, of disease.

Private Pedro Izquierdo Arnáiz. Died November 14, 1898, of disease.

Private Pedro Vila Garganté.

Private Pedro Planas Basagañas.

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Private Ramon Donat Pastor. Died October 14, 1898, of disease.

Private Ramon Mir Brils.

Private Ramon Boades Tormo.

Private Roman López Lozano. Died October 25, 1898, of disease.

Private Ramon Ripollés Cardona.

Private Salvador Santa Maria Aparicio. Died May 12, 1899, of wounds.

Private Timoteo López Larios.

Private Gregorio Catalán Valero.

Private Rafael Alonso Medero. Died December 8, 1898, of disease.

Private Marcelo Adrián Obregón.

HOSPITAL SERVICE.

Contract Surgeon D. Rogelio Vigil de Quinones Alfaro.

Corporal (Native) Alfonso Sus Fojas. Deserted June 27, 1898.

Private (Spanish) Tomas Paladio Paredes. Deserted June 27, 1898.

Private (Spanish) Bernardino Sánchez Cainzo.

PRIEST OF BALER.

Friar Candido Gómez Carreño.

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II.

It is thought not inappropriate to reprint here an article that appeared in a Spanish paper while the wonderful story of Baler was yet of thrilling interest to the Spanish reader. It was published in the *Heraldo de Madrid* of October 5, 1900. In spite of the fact that the report of the surrender of Baler was baseless, the article is rather interesting to Americans. The italics are the translator's.

"A REMINDER.

"A telegram from the Philippines states that the North American forces stationed in Baler have surrendered to the *Insurrectos.*

"The surrender of these forces in the same place where a poor Spanish Detachment, without munitions, without rations, without hope of succor, withstood an enormous force of the enemy for many months, is a consoling contrast for Spain.

"The Spartan abnegation of that handful of heroes, almost naked, hungry, but indomitable, inspiring forces a hundred times more numerous with terror and respect, writing in the history of the country one of its most wonderful pages, now appears doubly great, doubly glorious.

"Baler was consecrated by the blood of martyrs and heroes, and such achievements as theirs are not to be paralleled, cannot be boasted of by any other nation. *Haughty North America may have immense riches, extensive possessions, but she has no Siege of Baler, and she never will have one.*

"After long months of fierce strife, of resistance to the climate, to the afflictions of fever and hunger, and of re-

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pelling vigorous and terrible attacks, the Spanish Detachment came out of Baler with colors flying, victorious, invincible.

"It was a Detachment of dying men, of cadaverous faces, of bodies devoured by fever. But under those ragged uniforms, in those breasts trembling with the fever-cold, the heart of the Mother Country was beating, formidable and unconquerable, capable, as always, of astonishing the world by its supreme valor.

"They have despoiled us of lands and blood. It is fitting that this reminder, revived by the surrender of the North Americans at Baler, cause us to turn our eyes, still filled with tears, from defeat to those sons who yonder accomplished so gallant a defense.

"That can never be torn from Spain. She may suffer calamity, but her Sieges of Baler have gained for her and will gain for her the respect of the world."

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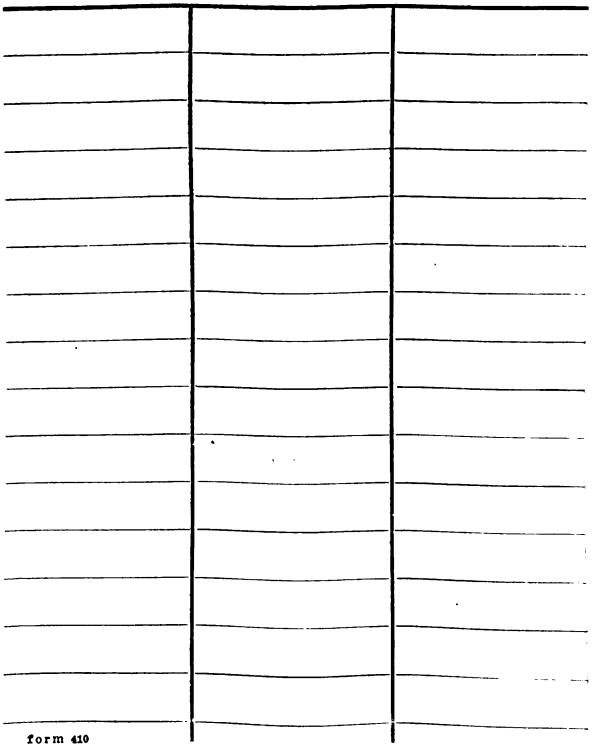

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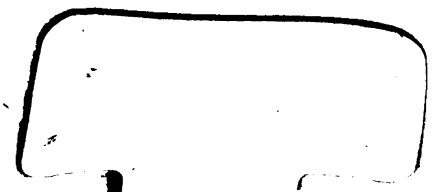

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